

# THE LONDON READER

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## DREGS AND FROTH.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

By A. H. WALL.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE TRADESMAN WITH A LARGE FAMILY.

Small have continual plodders ever won.—SHAKESPEARE.

Down by the Thames, amidst dingy ware-houses and wharves, not far from the Monument of the Great Fire of London, is a narrow, hilly street of shabby little old-fashioned houses, one of which is a low-browed, inconveniently small, lop-sided shop, into which you descend, as into a cellar, by a couple of stone steps.

There lived Mr. James Benny, known familiarly to his friends and neighbours as "Old," or "Little Jemmy," Benny.

For five-and-forty years of careful thrift and plodding industry, Little Benny and Polly his wife—once known as "Pretty Polly"—had kept that quiet little secluded shop, which, in just return, had kept them, and, for a certain portion of that time, their family.

It was a large family, of which five girls and three boys were still living. And hard indeed had been the struggle to provide so many with clothes, food, education, and the shelter of a comfortable home. To his honour, and to her honour, be it said, that by dint of self-denial, domestic economy, hard work, and the exercise of much tact and skill in both earning and spending, Jemmy and Polly had got all their little fleet of human vessels fairly afloat on that great ocean of life which flows to shores unknown.

And so, at the time this story opens the

worthy little old couple were living alone, with a wheezy old cat and their favourite old dog "Punch" for their sole companions.

Business was not brisk with them. They kept their old customers, but they made no new ones. Their trade was, indeed, slowly falling off; but, as the old couple's opinion was that it would, at its slow rate of decline, last their time, they made no great fuss about it, but lived their sober, steady-going lives in calm content and cheerful thankfulness.

It was sometimes urged that Benny should make efforts to improve his decaying little business. But the old man had no love of change, and regarded with dislike any way of conducting business outside that to which he had always been accustomed. He did not see the necessity—often urged upon him—of raising the floor of his shop, elevating its ceiling, and putting in a plate-glass front. "It isn't the shop, it's the goods," said he, "that my customers come to me for."

And when others of his trade were pointed out who were great advertisers, and were constantly selling goods as "ruinous sacrifices" and "extraordinary bargains," he would shake his bald pate and few grey hairs in solemn reprobation of all such trickery.

And he would say, argumentatively:

"I have been in this little old shop of mine more nor five-an'-forty year. If I ain't known now, all the advertising won't make me known. As to what you says about attracting new customers. Look here! I sells as good a article as I can buy at a fair price. And I takes as little profit as I can afford to live upon. I don't expect to make fort'ns, but I makes a 'onest livin' for me and my dear little old pardner, and I never cheats no one. If that won't attract customers, why the customers aint worth attractin'." That's my argment. Why should I go a-cacklin', and a-crowin', and a-trumpettin'? If I goes to the best markits—and they aint the cheapest, mark you—I can't honestly afford to advertise. If I goes to the wust markit, and buys the cheapest, I must tell lies about 'em to as many people as ever I can git to believe me by advertising, else no one'll buy 'em. Well, I prefers honesty. There's nothing exterdornery, an' I don't say as there is. Anybody can go an' do the same. I don't say as they can't. Them's my principles."

Benny, you see, was a plodder—old-fashioned and out of date.

And Benny's little wife, Polly, was as honest, as kindly, and as earnest and sincere a plodder as he was. Her character was full of endearing traits: and although, like her husband, she had peculiar notions and many odd little ways of her own, there was no disputing the marvellous prudence, economy, and wisdom she displayed in her humble housewifery and domestic management.

It was Polly's greatest pride to think that her house was, as her children had been, always clean and tidy, and that she could make "a golden suverin"—she never mentioned that regal coin without awarding it, as a mark of special reverence and honour, that splendid adjective—go as far as most women could; indeed, she generally contrived to make it go a great way further.

There was not a tradesman in her neighbourhood—and Polly thought it her bounden duty to deal with her neighbours—who did not respect her sharpness in detecting the defective or dear, and the shrewd judgment with which she made her purchases; nor a mother of a large family in the entire circle of her acquaintance who did not view with envy and despair the skill with which she had made her little large enough to keep her table supplied with a sufficiency of wholesome food, her children well clad, well educated, and healthy, and her husband out of debt. For Benny made Polly treasurer, and quite a treasure of a wife was Polly.

On that wet December evening to which we go back for the commencement of this story, in the little lop-sided, wainscotted room over the shop which has witnessed all their past cares and anxieties and heard so many of their frequent anxious discussions about ways and means, sat this worthy little old couple. Quite alone.

Their children are, as we have said, all from home. Mary is married, and lives "Oh, ever and ever so far away, near the sea in Cornwall." Jane has gone to Australia, to join her brothers Bill and Harry, who are farmers there. Little Susan is in service, and doing well; but Dick, the ne'er-do-well of the family, is probably somewhere where he ought not to be, getting drunk at some one's expense, if he is doing no worse.

Lastly, there are Ellen and Ernest, who are living together in a little house "all to themselves" (except that they have a lodger), "quite in the country," as Benny says, and "right over there on the other side of London," as his wife says—in other words, at Highgate.

There was a time when Ernest was a greater trouble to his poor father and mother than even Dick afterwards became. At a very early age he betrayed a terribly strong inclination to go

wrong. Instead of "minding only his schooling and thinking of hard work," he was always drawing—morning, noon, and night in school and out of school, always drawing.

This was amusing at first, when he was a child at home. And even afterwards the worthy old couple grew very proud of it, for the boy began to display cleverness. But at last this talent became a terror, for Ernest, encouraged by their admiration, openly spoke of his determination to be an artist.

If he had announced his intention of living by highway robbery, he could not have given a greater shock to his parents.

Old Benny said over and over again he should be nothing of the kind, but should "work" for his living, "like a good honest lad"; and over and over again, quietly but firmly, Ernest said he would be an artist.

Polly wept over him, her husband scolded him and argued with him; all in vain, nothing could shake his resolution.

"You'll starve, and die in a gutter," said Jemmy, solemnly.

"You'll never earn salt to your porridge," said Polly, emphatically; and then, wiping a tear from her eye, she added, with motherly feeling, "Why, only look at the artist as comes to the back of the Exchange, and sits there on bitter cold mornin's with his teeth a chatterin' in his head. See what's it's done for him: a shiverin' and a starvin' and ragged and dirty, with his toes a turnin' up out of odd boots that looks like crab-shells, and them beautiful things as he does on the pavement—the ships, and the moons, and the cows, and the trees, and the Prince of Wales, and the Queen, with a lump of chalk—quite beautiful. That's what bein' a artist is. Oh, don't, Erny! don't!"

"You'll disgrace us all!" cries Jemmy, hotly, moved to anger by Polly's tears. "I shan't keep you all your life; you'll be a vagabond, you will!"

At other times Polly and James would argue out the point with him thus:

"You see," James would say, with grave and anxious earnestness, "picters is luxuries. We don't eat picters and we don't drink 'em. Well, look here, Erny! It isn't one man in a thousand as can afford to pay for picters, don't you see; and them as does, why, what does they pay for them? Why, nothin' or next to nothin'. Nobody can live by sellin' picters. Now jest you think of it, there's a good lad; and then you'll come to me and you'll say, 'Father,' says you, 'I'm a goin' to be a honest, hardworkin' man, with no nonsense about me, and I aint goin' to be a artist at all,' says you, 'it won't pay.' There! that's what you'll do, see if you don't!"

This picture made James smile, and gave his voice quite a gleeful tone. He believed in it.

And then Polly would add, in the same anxious, earnest tones with which he began:

"And you see, dear, everybody must have boots and shoes, and vittles and drink, and such like; they can't help themselves!"

And James would continue triumphantly:

"And they wears out, don't you see! while them picters, why, they lasts for ever; they never wears out, not they. Now, just look there, Erny. Look at that there lie picter of your great-grandfather. Now, if he'd been alive, my boy, why, there it is. What would he want with another picter? Why, he wouldn't want another job done in that way never agin! So you see, my boy, that's how it is with them artists, poor fellows."

In this way, morning, noon, and night, whenever occasion offered, the worthy old couple displayed their parental anxiety—now angry and threatening, now pitifully pleading, now coldly and sternly reproachful—making their poor little lad very sad and intensely miserable, but never for an instant shaking the resolution he had so enthusiastically formed. He would be an artist.

When he left school, however, he went out to daily labour as the others had done, got a situation at a draper's, and gave his master entire satisfaction. But every spare hour, and many hours of secret midnight labour, and all his

holidays, were devoted to drawing. Yes, he would be an artist.

And thus obstinately and persistently he plodded on as quietly as his father had plodded on before him, getting at last into art as his parent had got into trade—in a very humble way. When this story opens, Ernest was what he always said he would be—an artist, of a kind, some said a clever one, earning a lowly, precarious living for himself and his sister as a draughtsman on wood, making drawings for the cheapest of illustrated newspapers and magazines.

But all the while, in a faint-hearted, desponding, and yet fervently enthusiastic way, he cherished ambitious dreams of a golden and rosy future—the sunset time of life's little day. These were ever before him, dim and remote, but strengthening and cheering him with ideas of making more ambitious efforts in a new field of labour. He dreamed of it, yearned for it, but never neglected for that shadowy reflection of a possible future the necessities of the present. Feverish imaginings of models and costumes, a knowledge of anatomy, time for studying the antique, and "going in" for nature, were talked about in the quiet evenings at home with his sister, who hopefully and cheerfully laughed and prophesied glorious things out of her unshakable faith in his genius and persevering industry, seeing in what he had already done the surest promise of greater things to be.

Their father and mother, coming to see them in summer evenings after the shop was closed, thought him wonderful and his success large enough to make him satisfied and contented.

"You're a doin' very well, my boy," Jemmy would say, "a mighty deal better than me and your mother ever expected you'd do—isn't he, Polly?—so jest you settle down, my dear boy, and be content. I should."

But Ernest was not of such making. He conjured up in his fancy such a large, well-lighted studio as he had once seen when he was in the drapery line and took some goods home to an artist's wife. He remembered the life-sized lay figure and yearned for it. He thought how glorious it would be when a block a week ceased to be the vital necessity of his existing, when—glorious time! incredible greatness!—instead of that humiliating, dreadfully depressing, patiently hunting up of editors, publishers, and engravers, to solicit employment for his pencil—grand ideas! triumphant goal!—they would be seeking him.

"That good time may never be—I'm afraid it never will—but if—" said Ernest to his sister, "if it don't, I like to think it may come. Somehow it cheers a fellow up."

"We'll climb bravely, brother," said she, "and some day, take my word for it, Erny, you'll get up and up and up out of the gloom into the sunshine. Why, it's been done! why shouldn't it be done again? and by those who began life as low down in the underground cold and darkness as ever we can be. And if we don't—what then? You're not half hopeful enough!"

That was true, and want of hope is a fatal thing in art.

Woman-like, the girl was more sanguine than the man. Her belief in one she loved so truly gave her faith in his ultimate triumph. Wife, mother, or sister, it is always so. Those who love us best believe most strongly in our talents and their triumphs.

Ellen, Benny was to her brother what Polly was to her father—a watchful, quiet guardian of everything that was his. She mended his clothes; she hoarded his savings; she was watchful of his health; and every penny added to her little store for the proverbial rainy day, which, alas! however irregular the intervals, always came, was a fresh gain to the great ever-present hope for the day when his work would come in more regularly, or be better paid for, and when, consequently, no fell swoops of bad times would scatter her sovereign-seeds to the cruel winds that carried them so far away.

Then, if that then ever came—then she would surprise him by secretly providing the books, and paints, and canvases, etc., he was pining



for, so that he might teach himself painting as he had already taught himself drawing, and thus plant a foothold for the first time on that upward road which, she firmly believed, would take them swift and straight to wealth and glory.

"Why, look at the picture we saw in the pawnbroker's window! you know—the picture you laughed at so in the Tottenham Court Road—'Daniel in the Lion's Den.' That was marked fifteen guineas. Just think of that, Erny—fifteen guineas! Why, it's a little fortune!"

"It's been there for years," said Ernest, mournfully.

"But I'm sure that you would paint a better picture than that, and we might put a lower price on it. Somebody must buy such things, or they wouldn't put them in the shop windows, don't you see?"

Ernest laughed and called her "a dear little simpleton" as he looked at her with eyes full of brotherly affection.

If he did not quite see the logic of her reasoning, he perfectly realized the feelings which found utterance in the eager voice and earnest glance.

Then Ellen began to explain to him what they could afford to do when he told this painting for, let her say fourteen guineas. He could do it and still have the drawings on the blocks to do, and then they could buy this and that, and get a sewing machine, which would be a great help in her work as a dressmaker, and a washing and mangling machine; and with such aids as these, this and that could be done at home, instead of being put out, and at a smaller cost, and in so much less time. And so on, and so on—all of which plans for increasing at once their income and their comforts were as seriously discussed as if this wonderful picture-to-be were not only already painted and in the shop window, but actually sold.

How silly! plain, sober, matter-of-fact folks, whose enthusiastic impulses are habitually suspected and suppressed, may exclaim.

But it pleased this boy and girl to be silly in this way. They felt the better for it, and, strange as it may seem to some folks, they really were stronger and more resolute in attacking the real difficulties before them, after contemplating these unreal fancies.

The house in which this very young artist—he was but nineteen, and his sister, she was seventeen—lived was a very little one in a row all alike, upon one side of a steep thoroughfare, newly made, and very badly made—No. 4 in Gospel Oak Road.

At the back of it was an old nursery ground, to the trees and shrubs in which it was Ellen's proud delight to point as "quite like the country." For the same good reason, with equal delight she regarded the great slope of growing mangold wurtzel spread out before the front windows. There was nothing like that to be seen anywhere near the old shop by the Monument, she remarked, and it was so nice when the Bank holidays came, for mother and father, who so seldom enjoyed a breath of pure country air.

It was such a rustic place, as Ellen pointed out to her parents. Why, even the public-house at the corner of the street, opposite the pawnbroker's, was countryified. They milked cows in the yard at the back of it, and its sign was "The Load of Hay."

Before Ernest Benny's house—it wasn't very much larger than a big doll's house—was a garden—which was quite as large as a good-sized dining-room table, with a neat tiny gravelled path running round between a dish-shaped central bed, and border beds, in which bright and pretty flowers were carefully planted, tended, and watched.

No one knows what a source of enjoyment that garden was to Ellen and her brother. And they were not a little proud of it. It looked so charming in the quiet summer evenings, when the rosy sunset gave the flowers a new beauty, and the passers-by stopped to smile at it and exclaim, "How pretty!" as they went away.

But, alas! they were subject to the visits of nocturnal thieves, who also admired it and marked it down for plunder.

Inside the little house there was nothing very striking, except cleanliness. All Ellen and Ernest's furniture, including their little library of second-hand books, had not cost more than twelve pounds; but somehow it looked neat and nice and cheerfully comfortable, for all that. There were six morsels of rooms, with the kitchen and scullery, and two of these—the parlour and back room—were let to a mother and daughter, who kept a school for very little children and "took in" needlework. Ellen said they were the "nicest creatures out," and Ernest's admiration of the daughter was so apparent that his sister used to make fun of it and joke about the future Mrs. Benny.

## CHAPTER II.

### LITTLE BLACK JACK.

How the dim speck of entity began  
To extend its recent form, and stretch to man.  
GARTH.

WE return to Mr. and Mrs. Benny.

The evening, as we have already indicated, was wet, cold, and windy. The genial couple, in good old Daroy and Joan fashion, sat one on either side of a capital fire, in the cheerful light and warmth of which the old cat and dog were right cozily dozing. The room was a little square, wainscotted room, with a sloping floor. She was knitting a stocking, and he was smoking a pipe over a glass of ale and the evening paper. They were both very snug and comfortable.

Polly's thoughts wandered far and near—now with her absent sons and daughters, dwelling sadly and longest upon Dick; now anxiously with that long-outstanding account of three pounds six and ninepence three farthings, which ought to have been paid last week, and would be sorely needed for the next quarter's rent; now with some goods which Jenny would have to order in the morning; and now in the coal cellar, as it was when she last visited it and saw with dismay that its contents were getting low.

Presently old Benny laughed, and withdrawing his long clay pipe, pointed with its red-waxed end to a portion of the newspaper, as he chuckled, and said:

"Here's little Black Jack agin, mother—here he is—always a gettin' on, and a comin' out. Good lor! how he is a goin' it!"

"I often thinks I see him agin, like he were," says Polly, musingly, and in a soft, low, pleasant voice, "downstairs, in the shop, a servin' our customers—the old customers dead and gone. Ah, Jenny! we's both a gettin' awful old, dear, ain't we? There ain't many of them old customers as comes in now, Jenny," Polly sighs.

"Ah!" says Jenny, still smacking his lips, and chuckling with enjoyment. "I wonder wot some on 'em as is dead would say if they could see him now, actually a halderman—a live halderman! I wonder what he's a goin' to be next."

"Lor! Mayor of London, to be sure," says Polly.

"Jest look here!" exclaimed Benny; and he proceeded to read as follows:

"SOCIATION FOR THE RELIEVE OF THE POOR.—At a large and fashionably attended meetin' of this association, 'eld last night, in St. Regent's Hall, the chair was taken by Mr. Alderman Weeldon, with whose energy and activity in everything wot concerns the welfare and well-being of the poor our readers must be perfectly familiar."

"And then agin look here:

"On Saturday evenin' next the Charity Reform Association Meeting will be presided over by Mr. Alderman Weeldon. The gatherin' 'spected to be a very brilliant one, many eminent people in the worlds of fashion, art, and literature havin' promised to be present. This evening the worthy Alderman preesides at the dinner given in aid of the Society for the Advancement of Art and Science."

"There, Polly, wot do yer think o' that for a reglar wunner?"

There was an air of pride and importance in the manner with which Mr. Benny laid aside the paper, sipped his ale, and resumed his smoking.

"And only to think," said Polly, "that he were our errant boy, and used to take the goods out—only to think!"

Then she critically investigated the state of the supper, which was simmering on the hob, which done she resumed her knitting, still thinking, thinking, thinking, while Jenny, having finished reading his paper, did as he usually did, fell asleep and snored.

"I wonder," thought Polly, "what little Black Jack's mother thinks of this, and if she reads about him in the newspapers, as we do, and how she feels when she does it. She never remembered his speaking about his mother, or for a matter of that, his father either."

He had said his parents lived many miles away down in the country, and told them that he had no friends in London. He never knew what had become of them, and they, he said, did not know what had become of him. He told them that they never wrote to him, and admitted that he never wrote to them.

"How proud and happy they ought to be with such a son as that!" said Polly to herself.

At last the supper was ready, and Jenny was awakened. And then the postman came and brought them a letter from Cornwall. From a little farmhouse in a hollow near the sea; from their daughter Mary, who was not of the little Black Jacky way of thinking, in the matter of writing to her parents. She sent letters home every week, and weekly were the letters she received from home.

Here is Mary's letter:

"Dunhead, near Wauceston, Cornwall,  
December 1st, 18—.

"DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER,—So glad to hear Ernest is getting on. The baby is quite well, and begins to take notice already. Owen sends his love, and wants to know when he is going to see you down here. He is as good as ever, and I love him more and more, only he don't like me to make a fuss with him, so I don't. The farm is looking nicely. I suppose you will have no difficulty in getting a renewal of your lease, as the time is nearly up, even though the estate has just changed hands. I hope not, I'm sure, after all these years, and we all born and brought up there. So sorry to hear the bad news about Dick. I often pray God to change his nature, and give him a new heart. It seems so strange that he should take to drink, seeing what sober people we all are. I've kissed baby for grandmother, and taken kisses from him for you, both, and he laughed as if he knew what I meant. Have you heard again from Australia? Good bye. God bless you. Write soon.

"Your affectionate daughter,

"MARY JENKINS."

There was much talking over this letter as the supper progressed; and then the books were made up, as they were every night regularly, and then the worthy couple, having seen that the house was securely fastened, went upstairs to bed, and, having said their prayers, fell asleep in each other's arms, with their nightcaps very close together.

## CHAPTER III.

### A SELF-MADE MAN.

"Oh! mamma," said the child, "if our goose had but the feathers of that peacock, how excellent a creature it would be!"

The night is still that of our first chapter, but the hour is a later one. The charity dinner is over, and the alderman and the guests, noble and plebeian, distinguished and undistinguished, wealthy and comparatively poor, have all retired to their respective homes.

The fierce gusts of sleet and rain are dashing against the great plate-glass windows of a room

in the wealthy alderman's West Kensington mansion.

In that room, on walls of olive-green and gold, hang costly paintings in handsome frames. Eastern rugs and carpets, whose rich and brilliant colours are blended into soft repose by the subtlety of their pattern, cover the polished oaken floor. The furniture, strongly and simply designed, by a famous architect, is in excellent taste, with no ornaments that do not arise out of its construction, and therefore artistically belong to it. There are stately book-cases, full of art and learning, in handsomely bound books, each in itself a reputation to its possessor, either from its rarity or the greatness of its author, even if (as slander says) most of their leaves remain uncut. Sevres, porcelain, carved brackets, and hanging shelves laden with curiosities and articles of vertu, statues and busts of marble, luxuriously upholstered couches, easy chairs, and low, broad ottomans, grouped with studied negligence, as if newly vacated by gossiping groups. Curtains of heavy brocade velvet shut out draughts from doors and windows, and partially conceal the wide, glazed opening into a large conservatory, in which, amidst tall fern-palms and choice exotics, gleam pale and vague, like skeletons in a closet, the white forms and faces of marble statuary.

Amongst these and other tokens of wealth, basking in the warmth of the cheerful fire, and the rich, softened glow of the gas light, sits the self-made man who once was little old Benny's shop-boy, and was nicknamed, from his dark eyes, black hair and swarthy skin, "Black Jack." He has newly returned from that said charity dinner.

The alderman looks very contented and comfortable as he sits there smoking a cigar, with the deep glow upon his broad, square forehead, large jaws, keen, deep-set, dark eyes, and iron-grey whiskers and hair.

He smiles to see again, fancy pictured in a large, cavernous hollow of the burning coals, the scene from which he has just retired. Once more he hears that outburst of rapturous applause which followed the great speech of the evening (his speech), in which, after the latest prevalent fashion of his age and country, he had so greatly glorified commerce, now the dominant god of our idolatry. Socially, artistically, scientifically, politically, everything is measured, weighed, and gauged, by its worth as an article of commerce.

He had told the noble and plebeian, distinguished and undistinguished, who, well-filled with wine and dainty food, listened to his eloquence with approving nods and smiles, or with reverential solemnity, how grandly commerce had played its noble part in this world's history. He had proudly asserted—"without fear of opposition"—that science, art, learning, trade, industry, and all the comforts, luxuries, and moral benefits of civilization, were at once the agents and the products of commerce.

"To commerce," said he, "we owe our beloved country's power and greatness. England is not only the richest, and, therefore, the most progressive, but also the most free, and consequently the most happy, under the sun. Nothing but commerce brought the riches, power, greatness, freedom, and upward progress of this mighty empire—an empire such as never before existed in the history of the world."

Mr. Weeldon likes to sit alone after these acts of self-glorification, and think about them; to enjoy them all over again.

And after he has looked back upon them, he loves to regard them as stepping-stones of a yet more glorified future.

In that way he builds as many castles in the air as a poet might. They are, however, all his castles—self-made, self-enjoyed, self-glorifying, and self-advancing. Even his wildest imaginings are business-like.

Mr. Weeldon is becoming distinguished and popular. He is, in the first place, a great philanthropist. In most of the best-advertised lists of charitable benefactors his name figures prominently. You can have no stronger proof of his philanthropy.

There is no false sentiment, no sickly sympathies, in the alderman's charity. He says we

have no right—not the slightest—to go prying into other people's houses and questioning them about their private affairs, however well off we may be, or however poor and distressed they may be. That's not his way; not a bit of it!

You never find him in their unhealthy haunts and miserable homes. But what a world of good he does! With money.

And yet (how inconsistent we all are!), there are other people's houses into which even this parvenu, practical, business-like alderman loves to go, and pines to go more frequently.

With all his prominence and these frequent appearances before the public, with all his wealth and his lavish display of it, the alderman has not yet secured a footing in Society. This deeply wounds his pride.

He believes that it is due to his birth and early years of obscurity.

Everybody in London knew the lowly depths from which he sprang. Old Benny had been talking about it during the past thirty years. It had been referred to in laudatory language in the public press. And he cursed it in his heart for its middle-class insolence. He cursed too the "chattering stupidity" of his vulgar old master and mistress, and that of their scattered brood. He did not know that the latter talked about him, but of course they did. Wasn't everybody talking about him?

He forgot how kind they were when they first took him in, a friendless wanderer, who, but for them, might have starved in the streets.

Mr. Weeldon was not, however, ashamed of his origin—no; not he!

Never was a man more proud of self-creation than "the worthy" alderman was. Never was a man more conscious of the dignity that doth hedge in a greatly successful man of business.

His pride swelled, albeit men saw it not, when he heard the firm of which he was the head described as "perhaps the wealthiest in the City of London." He gloated secretly over the reverence and awe of City men, who, metaphorically speaking, shaded their dazzled eyes when they gazed upon so great a luminary of the commercial world.

He thought himself to be at the top of the tree, until he found, with dismay, that other worlds remained unconquered—SOCIETY.

Now and then it was John Weeldon's choice privilege to add one to a fashionable crowd of the noble and distinguished guests whose names afterwards figured in the "Morning Post."

On such occasions he was swallowed up in the mass of people who crowded palatial corridors, staircases, ante-rooms and drawing-rooms. He had elbowed marquises, bowed to and talked with lords, rubbed shoulders with dukes and earls, and had more than once the honour of being swept by the robes of passing royalty.

Not that he respected such honours. Bejewelled and be-ribboned magnificence inspired John Weeldon with nothing but contempt. It was only for what it represented that he desired to share its radiance, and what it represented in his mind was honour to John Weeldon. Wealth, which crowned him a king in the realm of commerce, gave him comparatively small importance in Society.

Thirst intensified by the hot sunshine of success, is seldom satiated. Alderman Weeldon, a self-crowned commercial Bonaparte, resents all assumption of superiority. The pride and madness of conquest has seized him. Much as he has won, great as he is, he will risk all to win more. He will upset the thrones and dynasties of those who refuse to recognize his superiority. He says:

"Why am I, and men like me, to be kept down by their artificial claims and ridiculous pretensions? What is there in the mere accident of birth that dares to compare itself to the natural superiority of men of gigantic strength and mighty brains—the men who have made this country what it is, the men who have fairly won the honour and glory THEY arrogate to THEIR useless selves? These painted and gilded shams must go down before heroes of my type and class. We are the coming men—the indomitable conquerors of commerce. Give way! you poor blue-blooded shams! Crouch down! Away

with your wind-blown aristocracy that stays the march of progress and robs brave men of the status they have honourably won!"

Here, being excited with wine and warm imagining, Mr. Weeldon cast his cigar aside, and stood up, with eyes and thoughts aflame, foot advanced, chest thrown out, defiance in his aspect, his large, tremulous, strong right hand outstretched, as if in fierce command.

So for a few seconds he remained, the proud leader of an overwhelming power, visible to himself alone. And then he went to bed.

(To be continued.)

#### EMBLEMS OF DESTINY.

Didst ever mark an eagle in the sky,  
Cleaving the azure as he soars on high

In royal pride,  
Fall from his glory, and with wounded wing  
Lie on the earth a pierced and stricken thing,  
And so has died?

Didst ever watch a floweret in the spring,  
With the first tint of beauty glittering,  
No bud so fair,  
Fade, fall, and wither 'neath the cruel blast  
Which nipped the blossom as it rudely passed,  
And left it there?

Didst ever, in some hour of melting mood,  
When care or sorrow had thy heart subdued,  
Strike some old lyre,  
Whose broken chords awoke no joyous tone,  
Whose every note of harmony was gone,  
And fled its fire?

Didst ever mark upon some sapling green,  
One lonely leaf, amid its verdure seen  
Of blighted hue,  
So dark and drear, it mocked alike the beam  
Of April's sunny sky and freshening stream  
Of summer's dew?

Didst ever meet within the forest glade  
A broken fountain, on which Time had laid  
His hoary hand;  
Its waters dry, its venerable stone  
To ruin crumbling, or with moss o'ergrown,  
Not long to stand?

Didst ever see a shattered gem or stone,  
Or watch amid the heaven-bespangled zone  
A falling star?  
Then these, all these, if thou hast ever seen,  
The mirrors of my fate have ever been,  
And still they are!

A STORY is told of Louis XIII., of France, which has doubtless been made to serve many a purpose apart from the simple narrative of fact. In the earlier part of his reign, a comedy was performed at the leading theatre of Paris, which contained several sharp and severe hits upon the legal profession. The king heard of the play, and his curiosity was aroused; and on the first favourable opportunity he attended. In one of the acts of the comedy, one of the leading players, habited in the long robe as a lawyer, was stationed amongst the spectators, and at one of the ludicrous points of the play it became his province to break in upon the stage dialogue, and to denounce the speakers with indignant grandiloquence. Of course, in the sequel, the laugh is to be turned upon this seeming intruder; but Louis did not see the fun of the thing. Deeming the interloper to be really a counsellor, who had dared thus to show disrespect to his royal presence, he arose in his place, and loudly commanded silence; and then he turned to the man whom he would accuse of having broken the peace, and had commenced severely to berate him for his unseemly interruption of the play, when one of his attendants, who was in the secret, pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered into his ear an explanation of the truth. Louis was fond of a joke, and he not only laughed heartily at his ludicrous mistake, but he insisted upon supping with the chief actors after the play was finished.





["AS YOU LIKE IT."]

## "AS YOU LIKE IT."

"As You Like It" in a forest on a summer day. Isn't it delightful? What place in the world can be imagined more suitable for "a reading" about those "co-mates and brothers in exile" who found the woods "more free from peril than the envious court"? How delightfully do the whispering quietude of the leafy roof, and the soft, warm, perfume-laden wind, that touches their fair cheeks as with a kiss of tender reverence, blend with the woodland love-sighings of Orlando and Rosalind! Such a scene does indeed help to give force to the Shakespearian picture of the brave youth who "haunts the forest, and abuses young plants with carving Rosalind on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns, and elegies on brambles; all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind."

Many such a nook as our artist has delineated must have been found in the Arden of Shakspeare's youth—the Arden of Warwickshire—where, indeed, he may have walked and dreamed, even as these fair creatures dream while absorbed in the fortunes of the magic creations of genius to which such rambles may have given birth.

**ROSE CULTURE.**—The Kezanlik Valley, in Roumania, is entirely given up to the cultivation of roses. The essence is sold wholesale in Paris from £30 to £40 per pound, while it is retailed at £100 or more per pound.

## THE HIDDEN SPRING.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AN AWFUL DISCOVERY.

ANOTHER beautiful morning uprose on Alpinglen. A full, abundant, joyous life seemed moving everywhere. The warm August air had fanned the blue harebell into being, the crimson mallow into blossom, and the apple orchards into ripe fruitage.

The fishermen had turned reapers to-day, and were busier in the harvest fields on the cliffs than in their boats at sea, exchanging straight oars and silvery fish for bent sickles and golden sheaves.

Gleaners were rejoicing in their bounteous share of Heaven's free gift—the strengthening corn. Women were chatting and knitting together, as, slung on their arms, they carried out baskets full of barley cakes and refreshing cider-cups to the toilers on the sunny hill. Children happy in a rich jewel-store of gold wheat-stalks, ruby poppies, sapphire corn-cockles, emerald grasses, and turquoise forget-me-nots—Was there ever a fairer or frailer array?—in lieu of the coral seaweeds, carbuncle anemones, and other such valuables of salt pools and rock crannies which had formed their previous summer delight.

The whole village was a picture of rural industry and peaceful enjoyment, as far as its

poorer inhabitants were concerned; while still, at the little old pier down below, so quaint and so original, the waves whispered continually their own quiet tale of a calm August sea.

Pity it could not always be so! Pity that human passions should mar, and human sorrow shade, so much that was innocent, tranquil, and beautiful in Nature!

Early that morning, accompanied by all manner of good wishes, Mr. and Mrs. Merreweather and Mr. Hills left the rural village, where they had spent such pleasant days; and the same carriage which conveyed them to the "Spotted Deer"—the hotel at the end of the common, where they were met by the Brendon coach—brought back from thence the Rev. Jonathan Wenrose to his own pretty vicarage, his bees, his books, and his flock.

Now, however, it was midday, and a nutting party had mustered at the top of Alpinglen's fantastic main street, waiting only for the addition of the family at Syringa Lodge, to start, en masse, for the woods.

How is it that, when people are idle, they so often fall into mischief, with the hands, the tongue, or, at least, with the thoughts?

There was beauty enough round this little party—a holy, simple beauty in Nature—to suggest higher themes for conversation than frivolous gossip, or, worse still, unkind scandal; yet, for the most part, such were the topics discussed.

Perhaps, however, the expansive intellect, the cultured intelligence, and Christian spirit—where alone you find tolerance, a just discrim-

ation of things, and charity—may have been but scantily possessed by these young people in general.

Some may have been merely thoughtless, volatile, incapable of appreciating any but petty pleasures, and that in a petty way; others wishing enviously for what they could not attain; and evil is always hidden where discontent is harboured! Others, again, may have been by temperament insensible to the loveliness of nature. To them a cowslip meadow would be no more beautiful than a turnip field; a straight, blank wall as picturesque an object as the broken column crowned with wind-sown grasses, tossing their green plumes carelessly hither and thither in the soft morning breeze; and a cigar or a milliner's shop far more attractive than sunrise on the mountains.

These are people who, having no ardent affections, have no glowing imagination, no sensitive susceptibilities, no comprehension of the full meaning of life; its wild, great, strong passions are to them feeble as December sun-gleams and April raindrops.

Well, if they miss the glorious beauties of Nature, the powerful emotions of the soul, and the exquisite happiness which can be experienced through all these agencies, they miss also the keen agony which is equally derivable from them; and therefore it may be a problem whether or not they are to be pitied.

Here, then, mustered the party aforesaid, just where the lilac plumes of Michaelmas daisies, with their golden eyes, gave ungrudgingly of their sweetest pollen to the honey bees; where gay tufts of pink thrift lent brightness to the crevices of the worn, grey steps; and where ferns, like miniature palm trees, hung gracefully on every side.

"I vote we wait no longer!" exclaimed Miss Percival, who was one of Alpinglen's belles, impatient at last. "Helen and Effie can follow us if they choose; they know the way."

And in very wantonness, or spite, she crushed with her barb stick a crown of splendid golden rod that had held up its innocent little sceptre but a moment before by the wayside. Its head fell on the broken stem, and a wounded butterfly fluttered uncareful for to the ground.

"Go on to the wood, if you like, and begin the nutting work," observed Wilmot, carelessly. "I'll look up Syringa Lodge, and see what's detaining them. We'll soon join you under the haunted oak."

What if the poor, foolish heart of Maud Johnstone sank within her, and tears brimmed in her eyes, as she noted the alacrity with which he quitted her side to bring other girls to the scene!

But he was not destined to join them again.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DETECTED!

ARRIVED at Syringa Lodge, Wilmot was informed that the vicar and a strange gentleman had just been admitted, that Helen was not well, and that neither she nor Effie intended joining the party that day.

What could it mean? With angry impetuosity he turned back, and dashed through the gate into the road.

A taunting laugh greeted him, and Ruth Giles stood on the foot-path just outside.

"What are you lingering here for still, woman?—insulting me with your devilish laugh! Be off, I say, the whole cursed lot of you, low, thieving vagabonds!—begone! do you hear?"

And he raised his barb stick with a threatening attitude.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the gipsy. "Have a care, Master Wilmot! I can harm ye yet."

"I defy you!"

"Better not! Mark ye, the poor old woman a gatherin' samphur—lava—or what ye call it?—on Linden Isle two year ago, may ha' chance to have seen too much out there, eh?" looking keenly at him.

"What do you mean, woman?" asked Wilmot, in a sharp voice.

"What, may be, you'd just not like to hear me tell," she replied, significantly; "but, I say, Master Wilmot, wouldn't ye like to know who's got yer good locket, eh?"

Wilmot unconsciously changed colour.

"Of course; there's a reward offered for it."

"Well; look back, then—just at that house behind ye; 'Syringa Lodge' is on the gate; that's where it is, safe enough! Ha! ha! I'll send some 'un for my ten shillin's to-morrow morn."

Saying which she coolly turned on her heel, and, clambering through a gap in the roadside hedge, walked deliberately off into the harvest fields.

Had it been safe, Wilmot would have followed and savagely knocked her down; but there were too many hands busy among the corn, so, in a state of mind far from enviable, he strode off towards the headland, nervous, irritable, and vengeful.

Tearing on at a headlong pace he passed the last of the three arbours without meeting a living creature; but, once on the wild moorland beyond, he became aware that the cliff-walk behind him was no longer solitary. Turning suddenly, but more with fear than any other motive, he observed what he thought a suspicious-looking individual following him.

"And I've no defence but this trumpery stick for nutting!" he thought.

At any rate he would not proceed any further on the lonely moor; so, assuming an unconcerned face, he began to retrace his steps. As he approached the stranger, the latter produced a sketch-book and pencil.

"Excuse me," he said, "but will you tell me whether this is the best site on your coast for a view of Linden Isle?"

"I'm not an artist," replied Wilmot, relieved, "but I suppose you can see the place as well from here as from anywhere else; it depends upon taste, you know."

And, walking on, he reached Alpinglen just as his party were returning from the wood. Not being disposed to be questioned on the subject of Syringa Lodge, he took a circuitous bye-lane, and entered his own house unperceived.

Strange and scarcely pleasant was it next morning, on coming down to breakfast, to see the stranger standing opposite his window, apparently contemplating the dimensions of an old-fashioned damask rose in the garden across the way.

It gave him a vague feeling of uneasiness.

True, the little old-world village of Alpinglen had a name for being romantic, and sometimes drew strangers to see it, poets, and painters, and archaeologists occasionally finding its quaint beauties valuable; but this man, if sketching Linden Isle yesterday, was certainly not sketching the rose-tree to-day.

"I'll not give him another thought," resolved Wilmot, which, interpreted, meant that he would think of little else, and, hastily ringing the bell, he ordered up coffee and eggs.

But it was a very unrelished repast, for, each time he looked up, there stood his *bête noir*, regarding the damask rose, moveless as a statue.

"He must be a lunatic, surely!" he exclaimed, irritably, at last. "I've a great mind to ask him his business and send him about it!" which he did not do, however, though he sallied forth, banging the door after him, and strode gloomily down the road.

At a sudden bend he met the vicar and a stranger coming towards him.

Wilmot raised his hat, and would have passed on, but Mr. Wenrose stopped him.

"I must ask you to return with us to your house; we were coming to you," he said.

And there was a look of grave concern in his face, which struck Wilmot with no small surprise.

"You're an early visitor, sir," he remarked, with an effort to shake off his unaccountable constraint, as, turning back, he led the two into his parlour. "Have you breakfasted?"

"Oh! yes—yes, thank you," hastily. "We've

something more serious to think about. Your locket has been found!"

"Indeed!" And flashing through his mind, with painful foreboding, came the gipsy's words: "Where?" he asked, faintly.

For a moment the vicar was silent; then, impressively:

"It belonged, as you know, to Mr. John Ambrose, of Rowanok!"

"I—I—to—how should I know anything of the sort?" he stammered.

"Beware, Mr. Wilmot! guilt is only increased by futile prevarication. Mark what I have to say. There was an afternoon, two Aprils back, not yet forgotten in Alpinglen—an afternoon that proved the last of poor young Ambrose's life! You were asked to struggle with him, to knock him down upon the rock, and when he was prostrate—unconscious—to take this locket from his person! The witness who swears to this is in Alpinglen now. What have you to say?"

While Mr. Wenrose was speaking, Wilmot's face had turned ghastly white.

"Who is the witness to such a—a foul lie?" he nerved himself to ask.

"One who is willing to come forward and prove the statement—and more, too! But the locket is its own witness!"

Saying which Mr. Wenrose touched the hidden spring, which, with a snap, flew open, and the face of John Ambrose confronted him!

For one instant he was stunned; the next, flinging up both his hands in despair,

"It's all over with me!" he groaned, and sank back upon the couch. "Yet, I vow before Heaven I never meant it!" he exclaimed, suddenly starting up again; "though I did hate him as the accepted lover of—one whom I madly worshipped, and though many a time I could have felled him to the ground with the satisfaction of a demon, yet, on that day I swear he was not in my thoughts, till his boat shot under the very spot where I was standing, gun in hand—for I'd been shooting rabbits—and his happy, triumphant face, as he bounded up the rock, maddened me. In my frenzy I struck him with the stock of my gun. He fell, senseless, on the rock; then, horrified at what I'd done, I was loosening his cravat and waistcoat to give him air, when that accursed locket—clearly his gift for her—caught my eye, and, clutching it like a maniac, I shoved him frantically from me. The edge of the rock was nearer than I thought. I—I did not see how far down he fell. I rushed from the spot, out the rope of his boat that it might drift out to sea, and got back in my own, I don't remember how, to Alpinglen. That is God's truth—as I hope to be forgiven!"

Wilmot paused, overcome with agitation, but neither of his hearers spoke.

"It was only the other evening," he resumed, "that I took the thing out of my desk, where I had kept it hidden ever since, and found a lock of hair in it, which I burnt, little dreaming there was yet an inner case which would reveal the whole miserable affair. Fate ordained, I suppose, that some one should steal it out of my study that night; and—and I know nothing more."

There was silence for a moment, both auditors being touched with this sad recital of headlong passion and its results.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the vicar, at last.

"How could you have borne such a burden on your soul all this while, unremorseful? How could you—how dared you—seek the hand of his poor, betrothed wife?"

Then the stranger spoke:

"We have no alternative but to convey you to prison. It is not for us to say what is or is not capable of mitigation in this most painful case; that must be left for others to decide, after careful consideration of the whole circumstances; but I pity you, from my heart."

It was a magistrate of much kindness and experience who thus addressed him. At a preconcerted signal, two men entered the room, in one of whom Wilmot recognised the stranger on the heath, and he knew that fate was too strong for him.



James Wilmot was removed to Brendon Goal, there to await his trial at the spring assizes; and—Alpington beheld him no more.

## CHAPTER X.

## VIOLET.

CHRISTMAS passed; a new year dawned; snowdrops peeped up in the village gardens; primroses opened their chaste buds under sunny banks, and even in rank, weed-covered ditches—as we sometimes see fair, sweet faces amid ungenial surroundings; the grass was white with daisies, the moss blue with violets, and the days grew longer and brighter together.

Yes, early April had come round again; the "arrival month of the cuckoo," the blossoming time of another year, when the fresh joy of renewed life seems to smile in every scene, and scent, and sound around us; when all the air is buoyant and delicious as a breeze borne straight from Paradise! Who does not know the sweet, glad feelings that come with spring?

Helen had regained much of the lost tone of her spirits during the quiet of the past winter. Relieved from the presence of James Wilmot, she was less haunted by the hideous spectre of his cruel crime, and entered with interest into Effie's occupations and plans.

They were returning from a long ramble in the April meadows, Daphne, as usual, attending them; and their hands, in spite of their habitual reluctance to gather flowers, were full of Lentilies.

"'Tis said on a warm southern shore grew of old  
The pure silver snowdrop and daffodil gold,"

sang Effie.

"We must go in quest of cowslips, to-morrow, Helen; that sweetest of flowers to me, with its many bells on one stem, and the most ravishing of all spring scents. Oh, I love to bury my face in a bunch of them! And wasn't it delicious to pass along that railway embankment near Bluff Point, the other day? The whole slope was dotted with them, and the whole air full of their perfume."

"Yes; I used to think, Effie, that the spring-time was full of blessing!"

"And so you will again, I predict, my sister dear," replied Effie, affectionately; "I don't know what happy presentment has come to me, as if something unusual were about to happen; but I feel in a strange, expectant mood to-day."

They were walking, half-ankle deep, in wood-violets.

"As well pluck some, at least, as tread on them," continued Effie, in a changed tone.

And they stooped to add a few of the purple blossoms to the golden lilies, when a faint moan reached their ears, a feeble cry, as if coming from out a little tumble-down shed close by, called the Hermitage.

Both girls stopped, and listened.

The building had long been left as a mere picturesque, ruined toy, on the roof of which wild-birds nested, and within was barely shelter from a passing shower, so neglected and dilapidated was the whole concern.

Helen and Effie would, ordinarily, have shrunk from setting foot within the entrance, lest a stray snake should rise and hiss at them, or a robber be hidden within; but now, headed by Daphne, who had heard the moan as well as themselves, they rushed into the shed.

What was their horror, to see lying there, among the coarse, dank herbage, a little, prematurely-thoughtful-looking, wizen child of about two years, and with such a wan, pinched, wistful face as would have touched anything human to tears!

The little creature stopped its weak sobbing at their entrance, and looked up with such a piteous expression as you may have seen in the eyes of a poor, starving, desolate dog.

Shocked beyond utterance, the two girls bent, timidly, over the child, afraid even to touch her, and not knowing what to think or do; while Daphne began licking the tiny fingers. Instantly

the baby face broke into a swift, sweet smile.

"Oh, you poor, poor, little, helpless creature!" exclaimed Helen, moved to tears of compassion; "who on earth could have been so heartless, wicked, cruel, as to have left you here?"

Hardly had she said the words, when Ruth Giles, the gipsy, by whose agency the lock had been made to reveal its fatal tale, came suddenly round from the back of the Hermitage and stood facing them.

Less human than she had looked when rowing her little skiff past the "Blue Iris" from Linden Isle—more hard, defiant, and relentless than she had seemed that August evening at Gallantry Peak—Helen yet recognised her at once; and Daphne evidently did the same, for she gave a deep, low growl at her entrance.

What further revelation was this weird woman going to make?

With a pitiless look in her large black eyes, and her grizzled hair lying in disorder about her wrinkled forehead, she tore away a handful of the tall, seed-grasses among which the child lay, and, as if she had nerved herself for the occasion, spoke:

"I've been waitin' this two hour for ye to come back from the fields, by this way, to tell ye somethin'. Ye see that—that child? Well, I've done with her now! An' ye can take her, or leave her, just where she is—to die? D'ye hear? To die! I say. Which will ye do, my dears?"

There was something so frightfully hard in her look, as she spoke, that the girls shuddered with horror.

"There she bides, for me, till she's dead—that's all!"

Helen and Effie shrank back, absolutely appalled at the fiendish words. Then suddenly a softened expression passed over the gipsy's face, endowing it strangely with a touch of beauty.

"Stay, now, I'll tell ye her story, and then ye can choose what ye'll do. Hark 'ee: Her mother was as beautiful a thing as ever picked a berry in the woods—harmless, and happy, and good. She was my daughter—my own, my own!" she repeated, with a wail. "I'd two of them, and now I've only one left—she, my Rosabel, is dead! And would ye like to know how?" she added, with a fierce change in her voice. "One March night, out on the lone cliff there, she gave birth to that!" pointing, with a look of loathing, to the little child, "and died, when the sun got up over Linden Isle next morning!"

She paused, and tears, which were already flowing hotly down Helen's cheeks, now filled Effie's eyes at the brief, sad tale, told with such a shrill voice, and yet with so strange a pathos, almost poetry, and in so few words.

"The March winds were a blowin' the smell of the violets all about her—like them in yer hands, my dears; and the wretch who ruined her, who killed her!" excitedly, "came never a nigh to lay so much as one little flower upon her breast, although he knew—he knew how dearly she loved them! Ah! but I made him pay for the bantling's food, I did—ha! ha!—or I'd never ha' kept the thing a day. Killing my child, my beautiful child! But I was always a watchin' to do him a turn, and it came by at last—ha! ha! Ye remember, honey," turning abruptly to Helen, "the warnin' I gave ye against that false, heartless devil, and all about the goold locker, and— But it's not to hurt yer feelings, I mean, deary, only now he's not like ever to pay me a farthin' more to keep that—thing, she must die, that's all! And I've had my revenge on James Wilmot, Esq.—AT LAST!"

"But," said Effie, commanding herself to speak, "if you only prove this to a lawyer—Mr. Johnstone, for instance, he's a clever and just man—the estate of—of—the other will supply you with abundant means."

"No, no, my dear, thank ye; I wipe my hands of it all; ye can take her or leave her, as ye like; I will never come a nigh her more; but ye can send her to the workhus, if ye please; we gipsy folk don't deal with such close dens, so there!"

And, with a wave of her hand, expressive of

final farewell, she turned on her heel, and strode off sturdily towards the cliffs beyond.

"Oh, what must we do?—what can we do?" exclaimed Helen and Effie, almost in a breath, looking at each other for counsel, as they found themselves left thus alone with the deserted child in the old Hermitage.

"One thing is clear," said Effie, decidedly, wiping the tears from her eyes; "we must take her to Syringa Lodge at once, and then Mrs. Gwylliam will arrange what is best to be done; we can't leave her here, that's certain."

"But, oh, Effie! what a strange, a cruel task—frightful—hideous—would be laid on me if I—have to rear the child of—his murderer! I can't do it!" exclaimed Helen, wringing her hands. "Oh, Effie! it is too dreadful!"

"My dear Helen," replied Effie, calmly, "can you not see the hand of Providence in this, strange as it is? The poor little innocent—for it is innocent, Helen—was left here to die; we were led to walk in this direction; and to you, dear, it is given to rescue her, that the blessing which ever attends those who 'return good for evil' may rest upon you, and a wholesome occupation also be given you which is certain to bring its own reward! Surely the hand of God is in this! Come, darling, I will carry the child for you!"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Helen, warmly, "I will take her myself. I see it all now, dear Effie; you are right!" And bending down tenderly she took the small chilled form into her own arms, to wrap it in her comfortable mantle. "Oh, Effie!" she exclaimed, awe struck, "how light it is, how thin, how cold! Oh, it is dying, Effie!—it must be dying!" she cried out in terror, with a burst of tears.

A distinct, wild echo of her wild cry among the bushes close by the next moment startled their already over-excited nerves; and, almost superstitiously alarmed at what seemed such an unearthly sound, they darted out of the old Hermitage, with the child and Daphne, and flew, at their utmost speed, homewards.

Yes, Helen was right—the child was dying; and nothing could prolong its little earthly life! But it was carried to Syringa Lodge ever so tenderly, laid on a soft little bed, fed with warm milk and arrowroot, caressed by gentle hands; and no one saw the pair of large, soft, lustrous eyes, brimful of tears, that had wistfully watched the whole scene at the Hermitage, had followed all the way to Syringa Lodge, and were even still noting what took place from between the labouring boughs outside the porch!

Yet the pretty Romany maiden who had sung of the "Hidden Spring" in the autumn woods was close by—daughter to that poor Ruth Giles, whose hard experiences had aged and soured her more than years, and aunt to the dying little one, for whose sake it was that she had then sung her songs and sold her flowers, as seeing how her mother's bitterness to the child and craving for gold had increased together.

If ever the poor, untutored Romany girl had thoughts of Eden, Paradise, Heaven, she had them now, as her Southern nature glowed, and her warm heart swelled with gratitude and joy that her dead sister's child had such luxuries at last, such a brightening of her passage through "the valley" between Time and Eternity.

The sun shone through rosy blinds on the corner where the cot stood; and over the quilt were scattered double lilac primroses, on which the child's eyes dwelt, with a sort of wordless joy, for she had strangely inherited her mother's love of flowers.

The Alpington doctor did all that skill could suggest to ease and comfort, and the good old vicar took her in his fatherly arms, and baptised her "Violet," because, from Ruth Giles's showing, she was born in the time of violets, Helen, Effie, and the doctor being sponsors.

She lingered just a fortnight, with but slight apparent suffering, fading gradually, imperceptibly away, like a snowdrop that has been gathered, yet cherished to the last.

So one April morning, when the cuckoo was singing its first "Cuckoo! cuckoo!" in the wood, and Helen nursing her wee white

"Violet," Effie and Daphne came in from a morning ramble, the former carrying a beautiful bunch of fresh meadow cowslips, which she held out lovingly to the little one's gaze.

"Pretty, pretty!" lisped the innocent baby lips, with an ineffably sweet smile. "Pretty, pretty!" And the little head fell back on Helen's shoulder, as the guileless spirit soared away among the angels.

(To be continued.)

## MAY-DAY.

ALL our associations with May are delightful. It is the time of congratulation and of hope. We rejoice that the winter has passed away, and we see the summer approach towards us with his softest glance and most buoyant step. We forget the festivities of Christmas and the scorching glance and sultry breath of June, and recollect only that bitter frosts and dark days are the companions of the one, and that the other has bright colours and the richest odours, and sunset lights and evening winds, to make us happy.

The First of May was a day pleasant to gods and men. It shone as welcome on Olympus as at Rome and in the valleys of Tivoli. We have high intimation that Aurora was patroness of the day, or, at any rate, that she mingled in the revelry. Who, when he hears of

Zephyr with Aurora playing,  
When he met her once a-maying,

can hesitate to admit into the calendar of his holy days the one which was observed by such bright and airy deities?

Maia (May) is traced by some to the word "Majores," and is said to have been adopted by Romulus out of respect to his senators, who were called Majores. We prefer the pleasanter derivation, and acknowledge rather its origin in the starry Maia, one of the Pleiades, and mother of the feather-footed Hermes.

The Romans, who generally showed a good deal of animal propensity in their amusements, observed May-day with but unseemly rites; they exhibited loose sports and extravagant postures, to stimulate the degraded appetite of Rome, in the same spirit that they administered to their own pampered vanity, by proclaiming all the world barbarians except themselves. These sports were acted in honour, as it was pleasantly called, of the goddess Flora, who (ousting Pomona from her golden seat) was worshipped as the deity of fruits and flowers.

Floribus et fructibus præ-erat.

The ancients esteemed the month of May unfavourable, while the moderns deem it favourable, to love. Shakespeare, who may be considered as the best authority on points of this sort, speaks of

Love, whose month is ever May.

For ourselves, we are of the modern faction; and while we think that glimpses from the young-eyed god might make bright even the fogs of November, yet when he shakes his wings "with roarie May-dews wet," and comes down upon us like a shape from heaven, not even Sir Piercie Shafton himself, that ingeniously-tedious euphuist, may contend with him. This is but a strange comparison, perhaps, especially as we confess our admiration of that romantic person extends scarcely beyond his slashed doublet and collar of gems, and by no means carries us to the end of his speeches. Yet are we constrained to consider Sir Piercie as a favoured specimen of his kind; for we have seen some of the brightest eyes that we know glisten, though they were previously placid, and very sweet lips smile, at the passing mention of his name. We have felt that this was really hard upon us and our serious endeavours at liveliness; though the Elizabethan knight is certainly a sort of privileged person, and has written authority to rise with "mortal gashes" on his head, and to push us of this plain-spoken age from our stools,

with as little ceremony as he used towards the honest family of Glendinning.

But to quit Cupid and Sir Piercie Shafton for our subject, from which we have been beguiled by the latter worthy, let us now say a word or two about our ancestors. They had better notions of May than the Romans, and observed it with as gay but more decorous rites. Although the processions and dance of the morning might degenerate into too free a carousal at night, yet the more objectionable parts of the sports were never, we believe, preconceived. It is true, indeed, that good cheer was not wanting during the day; but it was not until evening that the bonfires were lighted and the actual revelling commenced. At Rome, vice formed a striking and essential part of the day's festivity: in England, it was either infrequent or fortuitous; it was nourished with potent dew, and sprang up like an exhalation at the close of the day, when the spirit of gaiety began to languish.

May-day was celebrated, as was fitting, by the young. They rose shortly after midnight, and went to some neighbouring wood, attended by songs and music, and breaking green branches from the trees, adorned them with wreaths and crowns of flowers. They returned home at the rising of the sun, and made their windows and doors gay with garlands. In the villages they danced during the day around the May-pole, which afterwards remained during the whole year untouched, except by the seasons, a fading emblem and a consecrated offering to the Goddess of Flowers. At night, the villagers lighted up fires, and indulged in revellings, which sometimes were, perhaps, "after the high Roman fashion"; and might, indeed, have vied even with those religious festivities with which the True Believers are still accustomed to reward themselves for their pious abstinence during the fasts of Ramadan.

By the Highlanders of Scotland, and also by some of the nations of Italy, May-day was observed, as well as by us. With us, indeed, it had the additional recommendation of being called "Robin Hood's day"; and persons representing Robin and Maid Marian were wont to preside on these occasions, accompanied by villagers in the true Sherwood green. The May Queen, crowned with

Roses reigning in the pride of May,

and other flowers, is a creature beautiful enough for fiction, and may vie in idea almost with the nymphs and spirits of antiquity.

In early times, the First of May wore a more solemn look than in the later years of chivalry: it was the day when assemblies were held for the distribution of law. Justice then was not "cribbed and confined" in rooms, nor was she masqued, in modern fashion, with a wig and ermine; but she showed her fair face abroad, and held her state by a flowery column erected in what was called "the E'ds of May." Perhaps, from the increase of luxury and crime, it has become necessary to make her more fastidious and imposing.

We are told that King Henry VIII., who was such a gallant in his youth and such a tyrant in his age, once rode "a maying" with his wife Katherine from Greenwich to the high ground on Shooter's Hill, accompanied by the lords and ladies of his court. This must have happened in the earlier period of his life; and we can well believe that the man who trod "the field of the cloth of gold," and had qualities which enabled him to understand and return the courtesies of his brother king at Ardres, could relish the pleasures of the First of May.

The Reformers were averse to all these sports, as savouring of superstition, and did much towards abolishing them; yet Latimer once found himself neglected, and compelled to give way to Robin Hood. He says (we quote this from Mr. Godwin's "Life of Chaucer"):- "Coming to a certain town on a holiday to preach, I found the church door fast locked. I tarried there half an hour and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me and says, 'Syr, this is a busy day with us; we cannot hear you. It is Robin Hood's day; the

parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let them not.' I thought my rochet would have been regarded; but it would not serve; it was faine to give place to Robin Hood and his men."

The poets have ever been the great advocates and patrons of May. Spenser, and Snakespeare, and Fletcher, and Milton, and all the greater spirits of England, have stooped from their lofty places, without disdain, to do justice and honour to this delicate month. Spenser, in his account of the months, thus introduces May:

Then came faire May, the fairest Mayd on ground,  
Deck'd all with dainties of her season's pryde,  
And throwing flow'rs out of her lap around.

Snakespeare has scattered allusions to May, like flowers, over all his plays and poems. We hear of "The merry month of May," the "May morn of youth," the "May of blood," etc., etc. He tells us also (as we have already said) of

Love, whose month is ever May;  
that

Maidens are May when they are maids,  
But the sky changes when they are wives;

and, what is perhaps more to our purpose, that it is as impossible to disperse a crowd,

As 'tis to make 'em sleep  
On May-day morning, which will never be.

Marlow, in his celebrated song of "The Passionate Shepherd," makes the pleasures of May a ground of invitation, as it were, to his mistress:

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,  
For thy delight each May morning;  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.

And Charles Lamb, worthy in all respects to be classed with the writers of antiquity, whatever Carlyle may have said about him, has spoken of the same thing, in some beautiful lines addressed to a child.

Milton talks of May and its beauties in various parts of his mighty works. He has even written a song "On May Morning," with which (although it is pretty well known), we shall conclude our extracts. The song is worthy of the day.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,  
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her  
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws  
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.  
Hail, bounteous May! that dost inspire  
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;  
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,  
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.  
Thus we salute thee with our early song,  
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

Thus then have the First of May, and the "flowery month of May," been spent by our ancestors, and celebrated by our poets. Now, there is scarcely a garland to be seen: the song is silent, and the dance is over: the revelry has ceased; and vulgar pursuits usurp the place of those pleasant pastimes which seemed a sort of first offering to gentle skies, and were consecrated by the smiles of the tender year. If we were dwellers in the country we would try to revive these things, for they are worth revival. They are landmarks of happiness, to which the peasant was wont to look; he enjoyed them in anticipation and remembrance; they stimulated his exertions, and rewarded his toil. The introduction of these customs would render luxuries "of little worth" and less desired, and might charm back many a spirit to its pure and early simplicity. The number of fierce adventurers in commerce and war would be diminished, because success in either would be less an object of ambition. It is but a bad thing, we suspect, when the minds of men are cooped up altogether, either in counting-houses or camps.

Not only have the revellers left the revel, but the very poets, who ought to be free from the alloys of time, turn their backs on Nature, and their rhymes to more profitable account. They pen a fiery tale, a satire, a love song, a compliment, or a joke; they prize, and coquette with imitations of Nature, but Nature herself is never worshipped and seldom sought.

We had written thus far, and had forgotten the only remaining followers of May-day sports.



The chimney-sweepers, with their soot and shovels, and brushes, and finery, had absolutely escaped our thoughts. To them the First of May is still "a gaudy day"; though we fear that their dancing is not altogether spontaneous. However, they are now the sole "lords of holiday"—the only sportsmen and revellers in the spring. They are, indeed, splendid instances of gaiety. They have crowns, and garlands, and merry looks, and sometimes even pyramids of flowers. They disdain men's everyday attire, and come forth in all the paraphernalia of their order; their visages, it must be confessed, are of an indisputable black.

Black, but such as in esteem,  
Prince Memnon's sister might beseech.

And this sombre colour is relieved by a liberal use of the brightest rouge. Their dress is adorned by ribbons, and glitters with tinsel that might look becoming, even on the boards of our mighty theatres. And yet, on consideration, we think that even the chimney sweepers begin to feel the influence of the time. Yes, it is certainly so. They are no longer the happy mortals that they were wont to be. They have become unlike

The inhabitants of the earth.

The grins with which they demand a reward for their melancholy movements are scarcely of this world; and the music which they once a year degrade from its sublime elevation to please us mortals on the earth below, sounds heavy and monotonous; its awakening spirit is gone.

## A R T.

### THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF DRAWING.

If there is one thing which I regard more contemptuously than another, that one thing is the way in which young ladies are commonly taught drawing. School-mistresses, regarding the art as merely an accomplishment which will not, probably, be long or usefully applied in after life or for any purpose more serious than that of amusing, commonly employ teachers whose own weak productions show them to be the veriest amateurs; teachers who may rightfully profess this, that, or the other branch of tuition, but who throw in a superficial knowledge of drawing as a kind of make-weight. Providing, with their aid, the pupils can, in a short time, submit for the gratification of parents and the admiration of friends, unscientific drawings, prettily coloured, school principals are amply satisfied. As a rule, they look for nothing further or higher. Indeed, it may be said in excuse for them, that if a sounder and more thorough system of teaching were adopted, it would be, in a certain way, less satisfactory. The progress would be much slower, the scholars' productions much less attractive and consequently less satisfactory to the uneducated eye.

It is a common error to regard the perceptive powers as things which require neither training nor development. They form the main source through which the mind derives all its practical ideas of nature and life, and, like all the other intellectual faculties, they derive new power from proper training and exercise. She who sees beauty where others see none is the artist: one whose powers of observation have been systematically cultivated. And the pleasure she receives is her great, but not her only, reward. She may be unable, for want of constant or sufficient practice, to draw or paint well, but she has not wasted the time she devoted to those arts if she has systematically studied them, for she sees with the quickness and perfection of an artist's eye, and may possess an elegant, useful, and rational means of amusing herself and giving pleasure to her friends. Let us only consider how largely the happiness and success of all our lives are the result of the ac-

curate observation and the quickness of perception which may be acquired in systematically learning to draw; to note rapidly, carefully, and correctly all we see by earnest, thoughtful looking, being the foundation of success in drawing. To teach this is far more important to the pupil intellectually, morally, and as a matter of worldly prudence, than the production of thousands of softly-stippled, ill-drawn inanities and pretty combinations of crudely contrasted colours. Drawing should be studied, as many other things are studied at school, for the sake of the intellectual power it gives, as well as for the more mechanical, technical, and manipulatory skill to be acquired in its practice.

No two people uneducated in the art of seeing—that is to say, in drawing—see alike. The very common inquiry, "Can't I believe my own eyes?" might be most truthfully answered in nine times out of ten by a very decided negative. The thinking of an uneducated person and the thinking of an educated one do not differ more than the perception of the artist does from the seeing of those who have no knowledge of drawing.

Seeing is not necessarily, as some appear to believe, perceiving, as I shall try to show. You sit before the fire looking into it on a bitterly cold night, and at last you awake with a shiver to consciousness of the fact that the fire has gone out. You were looking at it, but you did not perceive that it wanted fuel. Thinking, as you walk the streets, you see and pass a friend. Starting, you presently run back after him, because you did not perceive who it was while you were looking at him. You had eyes and saw not, just as at other times you have had ears—probably, if you are a lady, very pretty ones—and heard not.

One other illustration. You are at your needlework, and the endless mechanical stitch, stitch, stitch, providing no occupation for your mind, it retires within itself to cull and contemplate a few cheerful or melancholy images from the store-houses of memory and fancy. Suddenly you want the scissors, and mechanically feel for them where they should be. They are absent. The eyes are brought to aid the hand, but without seeing them. You look in various places, and at last discover, with a little half-amused, half-vexed feeling, that all the time they were "just under your nose." The mind was occupied; you looked without perceiving.

These illustrations should convince any one that seeing and believing are not necessarily associated.

Seeing depending upon perceiving, it follows, then, almost without saying, that to cultivate and improve the perceptive faculties, is to give the eyes greater seeing power. The fashionable exquisite who, visiting Rome, wondered at his artist friend's outburst of enthusiastic admiration, because he saw nothing in its magnificent art relics, beyond the fact that they were "er, vewy much out of wepair, er," he saw without perceiving, as truly as did Wordsworth's country clown, of whom it was written, in oft-quoted lines—

A primrose by the river's brim,  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.

The botanist would have seen in that common little plant a world of wondrous things; the poet, a fund of noble thoughts and elevating sentiments; the artist, colour and form, so varied and beautiful as to make the art which imitated them seem childishly pretentious and ineffective. And in each case only because the observer's perceptive faculties had received that which the clown's had not—educational development. In other words, had been taught to perceive.

And now, my dear young reader, if you really and truly desire to acquire genuine perceptive power, study drawing. Not merely to waste God's precious gifts, time and opportunity, in the production of silly little pictures of faces, out of all drawing, and landscapes which ignore perspective and nature, but to acquire that

quickness of perception which shall serve you in good stead all through your life—which shall perchance enable you to detect a false heart under the mask of a false face, as well as beauty in art and nature's true outlines and real colours. The old nursery rhyme which runs:—

Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been?  
I've been to the Court to see the Queen.  
Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, what saw you there?

has a lesson of this kind, for puss, in replying, shows the effect of a special perceptive training. She saw nothing of all the grandeur Royalty could display, but promptly replied:—

I saw a little mouse under her chair.

So runs another story of a barber who went to Court, and, coming home, talked of nothing but the shape, make, and kind of wigs the courtiers wore.

A. H. WALL, in "The Lady's Pictorial."

### LOVE'S ADIEU.

AND can'st thou, lady, say farewell?

And can'st thou bid me go?  
And does that tongue the language tell  
Of thy fond heart? Oh, no!

There is a tablet no disguise  
From lover's sight can veil;  
And in my Helen's tearful eyes  
I read a kinder tale.

But if you will that we must part  
Receive my last adieu;  
And I will teach my rebel heart  
To sigh no more for you.

And since my fondness thus you spurn,  
Oh, turn those eyes away;  
For should they bid me to return,  
I could not say them Nay!

I. R. W.

## THE HEARTS OF THREE GOOD WOMEN.

BY PIERRE LECLERCQ.

### CHAPTER XXXV.

"THERE ARE TEN EYES WATCHING HIM NOW!"

FOR one moment Tom Sheene was tortured by the thought that Godfrey suspected the prominent part that he had played in Eve's abduction; but for one moment only, for Godfrey, without discharging the hansom cab out of which he had just jumped, saw Sheene standing by the street door, and instantly ran up to him and shook his hand heartily.

Tom saw at once that there was, so to speak, an energetic activity pervading Godfrey from head to foot—a feverish, restless haste that was foreign to him. Tom saw it in the brightness of Godfrey's eye, saw it in the impetuosity of Godfrey's manner, felt it in the touch of Godfrey's hand.

Sheene was the first to speak.

"Welcome home, old man!" he said. "The journey has done you good; there's health and strength in the very tips of your fingers. Hold hard though! Something's up. What is it?"

"First answer me this," returned Godfrey, hurriedly. "Where were you off to?"

"Nowhere," replied Sheene. "Simply for a stroll. Why do you ask?"

"Because I want you to give me fifteen minutes indoors," said Mr. Overside, "to pack up for me, while I write a letter or two."

"Pack up?"

"Yes. Come along. I'll tell you all about it when we get inside. Open the door. That's it."

They entered their lodging. Godfrey closed the street door.

"How about the cab?" asked Sheene, while they were in the passage.

"All right!" said Godfrey. "I am going to get into it again in a few minutes. Come on! I've no time to spare."

Godfrey ran up the stairs into his own bedroom. Sheene followed him. Godfrey lit a candle, threw himself into a chair that stood by the side of the table on which the light was placed, drew an inkstand toward him, took one of his own visiting cards from his card case, seized a pen, and then raised his eyes to Sheene, who was standing by and watching him most anxiously.

"What's wrong?" said Sheene, forcing a laugh. "Have you married Miss What's-her-name—Elworth, already, and are you off at once on your honeymoon, or has Mr. Farrands taken you into partnership?"

There were no sweet lips to be banished from now—no dear little perpendicular lines to mitigate the pain of banishment, so Godfrey answered Sheene's forced jest with the muttered words:

"D—n Mr. Farrands!"

Sheene was not at his ease. He longed to learn Godfrey's news, yet he dared not ask for it, eagerly as he wanted. He laughed his loud, boisterous laugh instead.

"Don't laugh, Tom," said Godfrey, earnestly, turning the visiting card over, and making a few faint marks with his pen in the centre of its back. "Just now, laughter distresses me. Saving our good little woman's death, I have never had such a blow as this, Tom."

"As what?"

"Miss Elworth has been stolen from her aunt's house. That's all!"

Sheene was so surprised that he sank into a chair.

"Eloped?"

"It looks like it," said Godfrey.

"Who's the man?"

"That is what we want to know," replied Godfrey. "That is what I am going to find out."

"Who is suspected?"

"No one," answered Godfrey, looking intently at the few marks that he had already made on the card, and then adding a few more very carefully; "Miss Witchwood has no visitors. Farrands, you, and I (excepting Eve's doctors), are the only men, so far as Miss Witchwood knows, who have passed through the gate of Pondcourt House during the past seven years. For my part, I do not believe that love on her side has led her to leave her home, though I know almost beyond doubt that she left it with all appearance of willingness. My idea is that she has been made the victim of some mysterious delusion."

Godfrey glanced at his watch.

"I've no time to spare," he said again, "but if you'll pack my portmanteau while I am doing this"—pointing to the card—"I'll tell you all about it. We want it to be known. I have put advertisements, offering rewards, in two of today's papers. To-morrow, and until she is found, every daily paper will have one. We haven't been going to sleep over it, I can tell you, Tom."

Sheene opened Godfrey's empty portmanteau.

"What shall I put in?" he asked.

Godfrey told him, without raising his eyes from the card, what clothes, etc., he wished placed in the portmanteau.

"How many shirts, old man?" Tom asked, feeling more interest in Godfrey's answer than so trivial a matter seemed to warrant.

"Enough for a month!" answered Godfrey. "As many as you can find!"

Tom commenced to pack very busily. His eyes on the portmanteau—his ears most attentively on Godfrey's words.

Only occasionally raising his eyes from the back of the visiting card before him, out of which there gradually grew the outline of a

human face, as his magic pen skipped lightly over it, Godfrey told Tom Sheene what we already know.

"After we had discovered the beggar's footmark on the flower bed," he said, concluding the first part of his story, "I promised Miss Witchwood that I would find her niece, and instantly left the house and pursued inquiry in all directions."

Sheene, still busy with the portmanteau, interrupted.

"Has what you are doing there," he said, pointing to the drawing on the card, anything to do with what you are telling me?"

"Yes. We shall come to that presently. I have two strings to my bow. This drawing is part of the second, or reserve, string."

"Go on," said Sheene. "As you say, it is better that it should be known. I meet many people. I may be of assistance to you—who knows?"

"Exactly!" answered Godfrey. "That is why I am telling you. She and her companion may be in London, and you are as likely as any man to come across them in some way."

Whereupon Godfrey told him, in a few words as possible, the second part of his story, which we do not know.

"The result of my inquiries," he said, "was not very satisfactory. I simply learned three things in thrice as many hours, and none of them afforded any real clue to her whereabouts."

"What did you hear, old man?"

"That Grules, the beggar, had lately been sending telegrams and letters from Pondcourt," answered Godfrey; "that Grules, the beggar, had booked for London (two hours after Eve must have left the house) from the Little Wellmarket Station, and that a young lady, answering in some particulars to the description I gave of Eve, had left the same station, by the same train as Grules, but had taken a first-class return ticket to —"

"Beyond the footmark," asked Sheene, "have you any reason for mixing up this idiot fellow in the affair?"

"Every reason," returned Godfrey; "you'll see it presently. I returned to Pondcourt House at about eight o'clock in the morning—I found that Miss Witchwood's exertions had been in vain—neither she nor the persons whom she had employed had discovered anything. Mr.—Mr. Farrands was in the drawing-room with Miss Witchwood when I returned. He was sitting—silent and sedate. She was pacing the room—wild, unlike herself."

An angry flush came upon Godfrey's face.

"What do you think that man Farrands had been trying to instil into Miss Witchwood's mind during my absence?" he asked Sheene, in a highly excited manner.

Sheene guessed at once, and the thought came to him that the story with which he had despatched Grules to Pondcourt would have been improved by placing Mr. Overside in the position of the "tall, slim, fair gentleman." He had not thought of that till now. He cursed himself for overlooking such an advantage, though it was too late now to point to Godfrey as the man who had abducted Miss Elworth.

"Did Miss Witchwood take Mr. Farrands' view of the case?" asked Tom.

Godfrey's angry flush disappeared at the question. He answered that question with a nervous smile playing round the corners of his mouth.

"Miss Witchwood said," answered Godfrey, "Mr. Overside, Mr. Farrands has said, 'so and so.' She saw my indignation. I could not speak. She spoke for me. 'Mr. Overside,' she said, 'understand that I don't ask you to deny this to me. I will hear no arguments, no assurances from you, if you please. It is your duty to clear yourself to Mr. Farrands of Mr. Farrands' unjust accusation.'"

Godfrey was a very girl again. Tears started into his eyes.

"She took my hand in hers," he said. "I was about to speak. She silenced me with the words, 'You need not attempt to clear yourself of Mr. Farrands' unjust accusation to me. I don't require persons to inform me that my

name is Witchwood. It would be equally superfluous on your side to inform me that you are not a villain. I am as confident of the one as I am of the other.'"

During his last few sentences Godfrey had almost forgotten the drawing on the card. He bent over it now, and went on with his story.

"I'll pass over my sentiments towards Mr. Farrands," said Godfrey. "When I have found Miss Elworth will be the time when he will have to apologise for making that false accusation. I have no time now to devote to myself—until I find Miss Witchwood's niece; my time belongs to Miss Witchwood. When I am free to act on my own account, Mr. Farrands will have to explain his conduct towards me."

"Have you said this to him?"

"Yes."

"Is he still at Pondcourt House?"

"No," replied Godfrey. "He returned to London by the first train yesterday morning, promising Miss Witchwood, who received his promise coldly, to do all that was in his power towards finding Miss Elworth, and proving me to be the man who had deceived her from her home. But that he is older than I, and has done me some kindnesses, I must have struck him. Miss Witchwood thanked me for my forbearance. I followed up the faint resemblance to a clue that I had obtained. Miss Witchwood, who found it impossible to remain inactive, gave Mrs. Barrycourt certain instructions and accompanied me. We travelled to —. We learned nothing. There was no trace of Eve there. Passengers had alighted there by the last train from the west on Friday night, but no one could tell whether Eve had been among them. The one small item of intelligence that we gained proved, however, if it were to be relied on (which after discoveries make me doubt), that my supposed clue was no clue at all. The ticket collector swore that he had only received one first-class ticket from the passengers who alighted from that train, and that that ticket was pink. Had it been issued at Little Wellmarket it would have been white." After inquiring at hotels and lodging-houses, we returned, very much dispirited, to Pondcourt."

Godfrey ceased speaking for a few moments, during which he regarded with a critical eye the drawing that he had made on the back of the card; then, saying to himself, "It will do," placed it carefully on one side, looked at his watch again, and drew some note-paper towards him.

"Is the portmanteau filled?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Sheene, closing and fastening it as Godfrey spoke. "Let us have the finish of the story, old man, for I'm deeply interested. I hope I may be able to help you."

Saying which, he swung the portmanteau from the chair to the ground, placed himself in the chair, and lit a pipe. The third and last part of Godfrey's story was of vital importance to him.

Godfrey told him the third part, which was that on their return to Pondcourt House they found that Grules had been discovered by a man employed by Miss Witchwood near the Pondcourt railway station. This was on the Saturday evening. The man, having ascertained that Grules had not long arrived from London, had conveyed him, after some slight resistance on the beggar's part, to Pondcourt House, where he had been vigilantly guarded by Mrs. Barrycourt, his captor and the servants, until the return of Miss Witchwood and Mr. Overside.

"Threats, bribes, and promises of pardon," continued Godfrey, "eventually succeeded in worming the whole of the story, as far as he knew it, out of the fellow."

Godfrey then recounted to Sheene the story which Sheene had himself invented.

"And you intend to act on this, then?" asked Sheene. "You believe it all, of course?"

"Yes, and no!" returned Godfrey. "I told you I had two strings to my bow. On the one side I intend to act as if I believed all that the second hand has told us. On the other side (and simultaneously, if possible), as if I knew his story to consist of lies."



"Where is this Grules, now?"  
 "He was still in the town of Pondcourt when I left this afternoon," returned Godrey.  
 "He may do more mischief," Tom ventured to suggest.

Godrey smiled.  
 "I hope he may; but I don't think he will."  
 "Why do you hope that?" asked Tom.  
 "Because his moving in the affair must necessarily point to Eve's whereabouts."

"How so?"  
 "The scoundrel is free as air; but the scoundrel's movements will be known to Miss Witchwood for a considerable time to come," returned Godrey.

"Capital! Watched?"  
 "Very much watched," answered Godrey.  
 "There are ten eyes watching him now!"

Tom Sheene laughed uneasily. Grules' silence was accounted for. If Grules broke that silence while the ten eyes were upon him, Sheene and his scheme would stand unmasked.

"Then," said Tom, "you disbelieve the beggar's story?"

"I have told you yes, and no," returned Godrey. "This is a serious matter. It is safer to act both ways. It would be madness to disregard the man's story. It would be foolish to place implicit faith in it. Miss Witchwood and I have gone through all we know concerning Eve's abduction very minutely. We have discovered numerous discrepancies between Grules' story and certain facts respecting Grules. These discrepancies made us resolve on the second, or reserve, string. There is one thing that makes me suspicious of Grules' veracity."

"What is that?"  
 "Grules has lately been sending and receiving telegrams and letters. Grules' story contains nothing about these communications."

"But," urged Sheene, discovering another little flaw in the story he had invented, and, therefore inwardly cursing himself and Godrey, too, "they may not have been sent to or received from Miss Elworth's companion."

"That we cannot tell without great trouble," replied Godrey, "so woe as if they had been sent to Eve's companion, and as if they had not."

"What are your movements when you leave here?"

"I make two or three important calls. I make inquiries at the Charing Cross station, and I sleep in the Strand so as to make sure of the train in the morning."

"Where are you going to, then?" asked Sheene.

"On the supposition that Grules has been speaking the truth, I go to Paris."

Tom Sheene disguised a sign of relief with the words:

"You are right!"  
 He felt that he could breathe more freely when Godrey was in Paris.

"Now let me write my letter!"  
 He wrote his letter quickly. Tom Sheene watched him uneasily. Godrey folded the letter and placed it in an envelope which he addressed, then he left his chair, took the card in his hand and stood up in front of Tom Sheene.

"You saw him once in the dark," said Godrey. "Is that anything like him?" With those words he threw the little drawing on the table by which Sheene was seated.

Tom Sheene looked at the face that Godrey had drawn on the visiting card, and started involuntarily. It was the face of Grules the beggar, represented by Godrey's clever hand with the truth of a photograph.

"I should fancy," said Sheene, "that it is an excellent likeness. What a repulsive face! What are you going to do with it?"

"I think I told you on that dark night when you were so nervous, that this Grules had been at Exeter in the character of a man both deaf and dumb?"

"Very likely. I think you did. Well?"

"I have ascertained that he was at Exeter for some considerable time," said Godrey, "and I take it that I am justified in concluding that during that time he went by some other name—also that, whatever is known about him at

Exeter (as at all places he has visited) will not be to his credit. This letter and this sketch are going to the Superintendent of Police at Exeter. The superintendent's answer will go to Miss Witchwood."

"You want to find something against the rascal, then?"

"Yes," answered Godrey, placing the card in the letter and closing the envelope, "on the supposition that his story is a lie."

Godrey put the letter in the pocket of his overcoat, lit a cigar, put on his hat, and caught hold of the portmanteau.

"Capital!" exclaimed Tom. "Shall I post the letter for you?"

"No, thank you. I can do it myself. If you happen to hear or see anything about this Grules, communicate with Miss Witchwood, old fellow."

"That I will, old man. Rely on me!"

They left the room, and descended the stairs together.

It was certain, Tom Sheene argued to himself a little nervously, as they passed out into the street, that Godrey would not find Miss Elworth in Paris, upon which, as his search for her would no doubt be a most exhaustive one, Godrey would conclude Grules's story was a lie. Was it equally certain that nothing against Grules had taken place at Exeter? No. They would, armed with a knowledge of some delinquency, squeeze the truth from Grules, unless Grules were hidden from them. How could Grules be hidden, when there were ten eyes watching him?

"I wish you success, old man, with all my heart!" said Sheene.

Godrey, from the hansom cab, grasped Tom's hand warmly.

"I am confident of success," he said, "sooner or later. There are two roads to her, and I am going along both—at one time, one may say. My whole heart is in this search, Tom. I have to fulfil my promise to Miss Witchwood, to prove to Farrands that he is a liar, to save a poor child whom I love almost as a daughter, to punish the villain who has stolen her. There are a thousand incentives urging me on. Good bye. Thanks for your good wishes. So surely as I have hold of your hand now, Tom, shall I find Miss Elworth—shall I find the thief?"

"I hope so, old man!" said Sheene.

"Drive on! I know it, Tom!"

The cab, with Godrey and his portmanteau, drove off at a quick rate. It seemed to Tom, who stood watching the cab, with a sullen expression clouding his face, that Godrey's energetic activity was apparent in the cab, the horse, and the driver. He still stood looking thoughtfully up the street even when the cab had turned out of it. He was looking at the position of his affairs. The prospect was a little discouraging.

"Deuced ugly!" he muttered.

But for the fact that Grules was separated from him by those ten eyes, he would have laughed at all that Godrey had done or could do. So long as Grules was watched, Sheene would be in extreme danger.

"Deuced ugly!" he repeated to himself, savagely, when a light hand touched him, and a juvenile voice exclaimed:

"Mr. Sheene, if you please, sir."

Sheene turned, and faced the speaker, who was a boy of nine or ten years of age. He was the sharp-witted son of the stout Jewess.

"Mother said—" commenced the boy.

Sheene interrupted with an oath. He turned hot, then cold. He understood the meaning of the boy's coming; it was to tell him that Grules had arrived. Grules, unaware that he was being watched, had returned to London. At that thought, Sheene cast his eyes anxiously about him. Perhaps the boy had been followed. If so, "the game was up."

"Mother said," the boy went on, "that I was to give you this, if you was alone."

Sheene eagerly snatched the letter that the boy held out to him, then opened it, asking as he did so, the one important question:

"Has my friend come back?"

"Yes," answered the boy.

"Curse him!"

"That letter's from him, please, sir."

Grules HAD returned, then, and, of course, Grules had been tracked to Leicester Square. The position of his affairs was desperate.

He read the letter by the light of a street lamp. It was written in Grules's sprawling, half-illegible handwriting, and every word in it was wrongly spelt; but it caused Sheene to swear another oath, though this time an obscenely joyous one.

"Thank God, he has tricked them!"

The letter, robbed of its bad spelling, ran thus:—

"ALL right, honoured governor. Back again safe. Had four or five pair of ogles on me, but managed, after much dodging, to give them all the slip. Make no error, they don't know where I am. Got to E— this afternoon on foot, and, after doing a few fakements to my mug and togs down at the mews, came up to London in the same train as Overside. Shan't budge till you come!"

The position of Sheene's affairs was changed. He laughed his loud, boisterous laugh, and snapped his big fingers in the air.

"Overside in Paris, Grules' hiding-place unknown, and Eve's consent gained. Everything is in my favour. Overside said he was confident of success. D—n him for a fool. The game is mine. I know it!"

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

"WHAT WE HAVE TO DO MUST BE DONE QUICKLY."

GODREY OVERSIDE was in Paris. Grules, by dint of his cunning, had escaped from the eyes of the five men who had been employed to watch his movements. Godrey was wasting time, and travelling further and further from the objects of his quest. Grules' escape had done away with all chances of discovery. No letter from Exeter, saying that Grules was a "wanted" man, would benefit the opposite party, since none but those interested in his concealment were aware of his hiding-place. With Miss Witchwood's eyes (even during Godrey's absence on the Continent) on Grules, Tom Sheene would have been powerless; but Miss Witchwood and the persons in her service had no idea of Grules' whereabouts, and therefore nothing stood between Tom Sheene and the successful consummation of his scheme.

The sooner that consummation were reached the better. There was danger in delay.

"What we have to do," said Tom to Grules, "must be done quickly."

Sheene commenced his fraudulent work at once.

His first, and one of the most important of his acts, was to render Grules unrecognisable. With his eyebrows thinned, the hair of his head cut, and the hair of his face shaven, Grules was extremely unlike the Grules of Pondcourt and of Exeter. With a decent suit of black upon his body, and his face washed, Grules was another man. These alterations were made for the purpose of concealing him from Miss Witchwood's emissaries, and not for the purpose of concealing him from the Exeter police, for Grules assured Tom Sheene that the Exeter police knew nothing to his discredit.

Sheene's second act was to ask for an augmentation of his salary at the "Apteryx." He was about to marry a Miss Edith Lorrimore. The augmentation of his salary was generously granted, for he had been a good servant to them (the "Apteryx" company), and they wished him every good wish. He was overpowered by their kindness. The company's actuary supposed that he (Tom) would insure his life for his future wife's benefit. Tom Sheene thought he had better do so. He was what insurance companies call a "good life." His life was accordingly accepted, after a mere formal examination by the company's medical men, at a slightly reduced premium, for the sum of five hundred pounds.



["SHE MUST CLEAR OUT IN LESS THAN THREE MONTHS!"]

Having done this, he informed his Walworth landlady that he was about to leave her. Was he dissatisfied with anything? she asked. No; he was going to another neighbourhood to live; he wanted change of scene. Perhaps, she insinuated. Mr. Sheene was going to be married. Mr. Sheene appeared somewhat confused, and answered:

"Well, no, not exactly."

From which reply, the Walworth landlady naturally drew certain conclusions.

There was an ugly little story attaching to Tom Sheene, with which the Walworth landlady, Mrs. Sheene, Dr. Pask, and Mr. Overseide were conversant. This ugly little story concerned a too confiding young woman of the name of Edith, and proved of great service to the success of his scheme.

It would not do, Tom thought, to keep his new address a secret. That would possibly arouse Godfrey's suspicion on Godfrey's return. Nor would it be at all advisable to place Godfrey and the two persons who knew Godfrey and himself (Mrs. Sheene and Dr. Pask) on the visitors' list of his new abode. He must close his door to Godfrey, and all persons who were likely to know Godfrey; but he must do so, without appearing to wish to do so. He hit upon an excellent plan. He used the ugly little story of the past for the benefit of the present and the future.

"It's beastly lonely at Walworth," he said to Pask, "and I can't afford to marry. I suppose when I want to see you, old fellow, I shall have to come to you. I suppose it will be the same with Overseide, who is dreadfully proper on that style of thing. I gave a hint to the mother about it, the other day, because I thought she'd be coming to my new diggings when I get them, which I should not have liked. There's no fear of that now. She swears she'll never speak to me again."

Mrs. Sheene, Dr. Pask, and the Walworth landlady (who would be sure to tell Godfrey directly he returned to London) were placed by Mr. Sheene under a false impression. When the

time came Dr. Pask could be enlightened, but for the present Tom's new doors were doors through which neither Godfrey nor any one knowing Godfrey, would pass, for Tom had given out that he was about to live again with the too confiding and somewhat disreputable person who had once made a maidenly attempt to take his valuable life—the young woman, Edith.

While Tom was engaged in keeping unwelcome guests from his new diggings, Grules, who now looked like a respectable but melancholy undertaker, was traversing the suburbs in search of an advantageous abode, for the apartments as yet only existed in imagination.

"Lodgings won't do, governor," Grules had said one day to Sheene; "we must have a whole house."

Sheene had agreed with him on that point. Grules had also suggested that the house should have a "swellish" address to it, and be situated in a very quiet street. Sheene had agreed with him again. An entire house, and an irreproachable female housekeeper, were certainly necessary expenses.

"People often let their house and furniture for six months or a year," Sheene had said to Grules. "Get a crib on that sort of terms if you can, and be quick about it."

After much searching, Mr. Grules discovered exactly the sort of house which was wanted. It was detached, it stood in a quiet little suburban grove, which had no thoroughfare, and it was to be let furnished, on moderate terms, for six months. The little detached villa, however, had one disadvantage. If Mr. Sheene lived there, his address would be, "No. 7, Hermione Grove, St. John's Wood." A respectable address was very essential. There could be no objection to the "Hermione Grove," individually, but in conjunction with the "St. John's Wood," there was much objection to it. Yet the villa, which was not actually in St. John's Wood proper, offered numerous advantages. The ingenious Grules soon drove through the objection.

"Let's take it, governor," he said, "and call it Regent's Park."

Sheene followed Grules's advice. The detached villa and its furniture were hired for six months, and paid for in advance. Grules then procured a respectable housekeeper, and installed her there—also a foolish girl to run errands, and installed her there, too. To them he represented himself as the "gent's man."

Everything was in readiness for the reception of the bride and bridegroom, and in less than two weeks after Godfrey's departure from London, Miss Elworth, still deluding herself, still trusting Mr. Sheene, and still believing that what she was about to do was the one sure way of establishing the happiness of the man and the woman whom she so madly loved, was taken by Mr. Sheene, in a closed cab, from the dingy clothes' shop to the neighbouring registrar's office.

"It will not do to be discovered yet, my dearest Eve. We must keep the Christian name that has been placed in the register until you learn to love me, and render concealment unnecessary. You are two persons," Sheene added, with a bright laugh, for his spirits were most exuberant on that morning. "You are Overseide's Eve. You are my Edith!"

There was much craft exhibited even in the apparently trivial matter of choosing this name for her. Even if, by any accident, the persons connected with life insurance, whom he felt it necessary to invite to his house, were to come across Overseide, or any one who was in communication with Overseide, and to speak of Sheene, they would speak of Sheene's wife as being called Edith, and Overseide would accept the word "wife" as a harmless and natural deception, and the "Edith" as the Edith of the ugly little story.

Overseide had never seen the real Edith. If he made inquiries about her, he would learn that she was very fair, young, pretty, and delicate. If he made inquiries about Sheene's companion, he would learn the same.

From the registrar's office they journeyed in the closed cab to 7, Hermione Grove.



Eve jumped from the cab lightly. Her soul, for a few moments, was steeped in ecstasy, for, as she looked at the detached villa, it seemed to disappear or rather to be gradually blotted out by another house, and by other persons than Grules grinning at her from the open door, and the respectable housekeeper and the foolish girl waiting on the steps for her, as one dissolving view usurps the place of another.

Pondcourt—dear familiar Pondcourt House—the poor child saw, with Godfrey and Miss Witchwood standing by the gateway, hand in hand.

"I am bringing them together!" she said to herself, and then there came another thought, born of the delusion under which she had voluntarily placed herself. "This is Godfrey's house. These are Godfrey's servants. I am Godfrey's wife."

Left for a few minutes alone with Grules while the respectable housekeeper was showing Eve

her room, and assisting her to take off her hat and cloak, Tom Sheene indulged in a laugh, which was, even for him, unusually long and loud. He struck Grules on the shoulder heartily. Grules answered by grinning and chuckling.

"Mine!" said Sheene, warmly, uncorking, as he spoke, a bottle of Moselle, and filling two glasses from it. "Man and wife! Drink, Grules, drink!"

They emptied the two glasses.

"Curse you for a melancholy wretch!" laughed Tom, whose boisterous good humour had a tinge of the I'm-not-afraid sort of feeling in it. "What the devil are you scowling at?"

"I'm afeared you'll get nutty on the girl!"

Tom laughed again.

"Not I, Grules. Not I. Hush! She's returning."

"I'll hush safe enough," answered Grules, in

a whisper, "but don't you get so jolly as to let the time slip by."

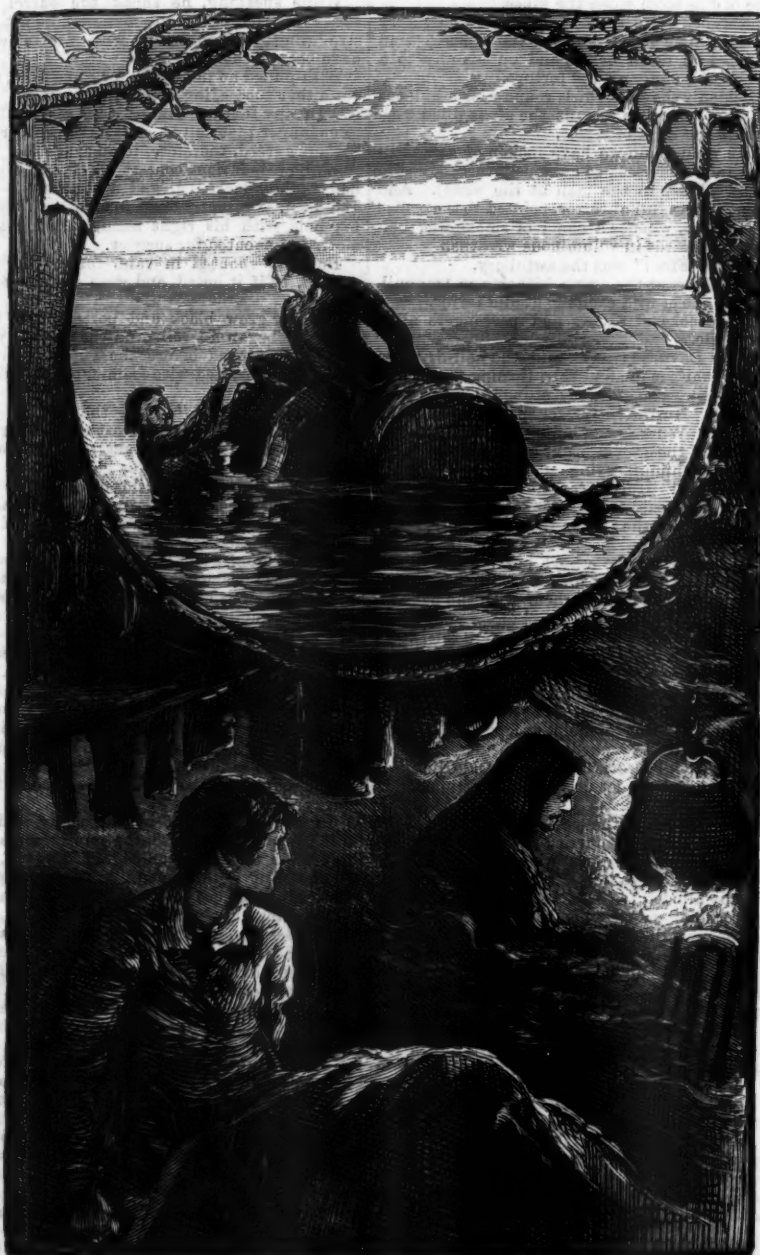
Grules lifted his left foot about three-quarters of a foot from the floor, bent his knee, and grinned again, then resumed his natural position.

"What the — does that mean?"

"Digging!" answered Grules. "It's only proper to give you a reminder. Just you remember this, governor. You've only got this crib for six month. Me and you must clear out before them six month is over. SHE must clear out altogether in less than three!"

For a second an expression of gravity rested on the face of Sheene, and some latent sense of terror flashed into his eyes. But it was gone in a moment, and was succeeded by a look of reckless defiance and devilish mockery, as if the man and his conscience were at war, and the former had won the fight.

(To be continued.)



## HE WITHERED BRANCH.

A ROMANTIC STORY OF THE  
WELSH COAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WALLADMOR."

### PROLOGUE.

THE time is one of storm and trouble, socially and politically.

There is a wildly turbulent, lawless spirit abroad amidst the lower classes, and in all classes elements of discontent and political danger exist.

Riots which only bloodshed can suppress, treasonable conspiracies, and seditious meetings which openly advocate an appeal to physical force, awaken public alarm throughout the country.

A spirit of insubordination has infected the army and navy; criminal outrages of the most barbarous nature increase in number and violence.

Ireland, alas! is in its usual state of bitter discontent, chaotic disorder, and chronic rebellion.

Convictions for high treason are rapidly accumulating, and they are arrived at so quickly, and with so little regard to the ordinary and just forms of law, that all true lovers of liberty are seriously disquieted, and most people believe that England is on the brink of Revolution—meaning Ruin. Petitions to the King embody the popular mistrust of the Government.

Political measures are carried with high-handed indifference to public opinion, and are such as statesmen never resort to but at the worst of times.

English Liberty is in Danger!

It is the time of the Cato Street Conspiracy, and Thistlewood, with many of his accomplices and associates, have newly paid the awful penalty of high treason on the scaffold.

Yet politicians in both Houses say it is a good time—that the nation is in a flourishing position; and to prove it they have long lines of statistical figures, all showing that imports and exports are increasing, farmers flourishing, and land-owners making money.

Yet the poor starve!

They have, of course, no right to starve in such a state of general prosperity—but they do! Hence riots, conspiracies, increased crime, and general disorder—the natural outcomes of poverty and misery in desperation.

The statistical politicians are in a state of profound satisfaction. What are facts to them, compared with figures? "Those who wear the shoe know where it pinches." Those who have made the shoe say it has excellent upper leather,

a stout sole, and good sound workmanship; and therefore it is a good shoe, and cannot be improved—vide statistics.

It is the duty of the craft to stand up for the craftsman—not for the general public. As it had been before, so it is now, as it shall be hereafter ever and over, so long as party influences are stronger than patriotic feelings.

Such is the time, and such is the state of the country when the newspapers publish the following:—

“ONE THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD has been offered by the Government for the capture of the Cato Street Conspirator known on the Welsh Coast as Captain Edward Nicholas. He is a young man about twenty-four years of age, tall, and of a stately, handsome exterior, with fine regular features. Eyes and hair dark.”

This was published on the second of October. On the third of the same month the notice next in order appeared:—

“EDWARD NICHOLAS, the Cato Street Conspirator, has been traced to the Isle of Wight, whence, it is supposed, he escaped to France.”

On the following morning the public read:—

“CAPTURE OF EDWARD NICHOLAS.—This arch-traitor was yesterday taken prisoner, and is now on his way home for trial.”

And on the Saturday appeared the last newspaper extract we shall make before commencing our story:—

“CARNARVON.—Yesterday the inhabitants of this city were witnesses of a grand but affecting spectacle, seen from the highlands of the coast. The steam vessel ‘Halcyon,’ from the Isle of Wight, bound to the north coast of Wales, was suddenly, in mid-channel, when not a breath of wind ruffled the sea, driven into our bay. Scarcely had she reached the point of Harlech, when a column of smoke was seen rising from her deck, and a few moments after a dreadful report echoing from the mountains made known that the powder magazine had blown up, and the vessel was shattered to pieces. The barques which crowded to the spot from all quarters arrived to find only a few floating spars, and, a storm arising, they were soon after compelled to return. Of the whole crew and sixty passengers, chiefly English people returning from France, not one was saved. It is said that an atrocious criminal was on board the ‘Halcyon.’ We await with the utmost anxiety for the details of this melancholy event.”

To the great grief of more than one noble English family, this account was confirmed in its most dreadful circumstances.

## CHAPTER I.

### A TERRIBLE ESCAPE.

A QUIET autumn evening, in the year 1830. The chilly mists are stealing up out of the rocky valleys of North Wales, and climbing the precipitous mountain heights. Strata and narrow layers of filmy clouds float in the pale violet and sea-green sky, and are faintly tinged with the rosy and golden hues of the sunset as they melt from view above the descending orb of day.

Merrily on its way to this north coast of Wales sped the “Halcyon” steam packet. The day was bright, the sea calm, and the sky clear. The boat was large and commodious, armed for war, but fitted up for passengers, sixty of whom were then on board.

The placid repose of the hour, and the freshness of the air rendered a lounge or walk upon the deck an enjoyable treat, of which many availed themselves.

Amongst them was a tall, handsome young man, slightly built, and with dark expressive eyes, who was gazing earnestly at the distant Welsh coast, apparently with deep emotion.

A half-drunken sailor, who had been boasting his services to king and country to all who

would condescend to listen to him, was grumbling because the steward had given him gin for rum, to an elderly London shopkeeper, who had escaped business for a sea-trip, and was as gleeful over the change as if he had been a portly, bald-headed old bird in spectacles, newly released from a cage.

He had been ostentatiously familiar with the captain, and was talking nautically, in the inspiration of the hour.

Some elderly ladies, in straw hats with enormous brims, sat near, with a couple of young ladies from a boarding-school in the Isle of Wight, who were both very bright-eyed and merry in the delight of going home.

A cockney, striving to look sailor-like, with a white face and an expression of intense melancholy, wanders restlessly to and fro, casting his vacant eyes alternately from the compass in the binnacle to the vane on the mast-head, and, pausing, he advises a lady with a face even whiter and an expression more wretched than his own, to keep to the leeward side, and “take care of the boom when she gives.”

Everybody else is very loquacious and merry on deck, above the head of the doomed man fastened in down below, and on his way to a cruel death of agony and torture.

Suddenly the ship whirls round with a hideous heaving, and in an instant the air is filled with shrieks and cries of terror.

The young man we have spoken of as watching the Welsh coast so anxiously turned, as did many others, to the man at the wheel. And he, with eyes full of terror, pointed to the centre of the ship, whence a cloud of smoke was bellying upwards in voluminous wreaths.

“Fire! Fire!” was the awful cry. In an instant the scene, hitherto so tranquil, became one of wild excitement and terror.

The cheeks of sailors and passengers alike grew pale.

“Old Davy has us!” said the half-drunken man-o’-war’s man; and then turning to a group of the crew, who stood by stupefied by terror, he cried, “Hurrah! boys, for sport; let’s end life merrily! Where’s the brandy casks?”

Some of the crew swore at him, others laughed and joined him in crying:

“Brandy! Hurrah for the brandy casks!”

“Ay, ay!” said the reeling sot. “Old Nick’ll soon swallow the lot! Let us swallow the brandy!”

The master of the vessel, hearing these wild cries, came hurrying forward with his cutlass drawn, striking some of them with the flat of it as he passed.

His efforts to control the men were futile.

Amidst an uproar of voices, the majority of the crew rushed below, stove in the brandy casks, drank everything they could find, and paid no sort of regard to the clamorous outcries of the passengers for help, except once, when a drunkard’s voice replied:

“Help? There is no help! Old Nick will swallow us all, so let us swallow a little comfort first!”

The captain of the vessel, who retained his presence of mind, hurried on deck. With his sabre he cut the ropes which suspended the boat, and as he passed Bertram, the young man already alluded to (who, in preparation for the approaching catastrophe, had buckled about his person a small portmanteau, and stood ready to leap into the boat), he turned upon him with a sudden cry of anger and surprise, drew a pistol and fired at him, missed, and then with a blow from his flat struck him overboard.

All this was the work of an instant.

Scarcely had the young man been swept to a little distance by a wave, when the ship blew up with a tremendous crash!

The shattered ruins were carried aloft to an immense elevation.

Bertram was stunned by the explosion; and upon recovering his senses saw no object upon the surface of the waters—not one! The ship had vanished; nothing remained but a few spars floating in the offing!

In the peril of the moment, Bertram exerted his utmost force to swim through the tumbling billows to a barrel at a little distance, which ap-

peared and disappeared at intervals, sometimes riding aloft, and sometimes hidden by the waves.

At the moment when his powers began to fail him, he succeeded in reaching it.

But scarcely had he laid hold of the outermost rim with both hands, when the barrel was swayed down from the opposite side.

A shipwrecked man, whose long, wet hair streamed over his face, had fixed his nails, as if they were the talons of a vulture, on the hoops of the barrel, and, by the energy of his grip, seemed as though he would have pressed them through the wood itself.

He was aware of his competitor, and he shook his head wildly to clear the hair out of his eyes. His opened lips displayed his teeth pressed firmly together.

“No,” he muttered; “though the devil himself, you must down into the sea, for the barrel will not support us both;” and then cried: “Death and the devil! leave go your hold, will you?”

While speaking, he shook the barrel with such force, that the young man, had he not been struggling so desperately with death, would have been dashed under the water.

Both pulled at the barrel for some time, without either succeeding in hoisting himself upon it. In any further contest they seemed likely to endanger themselves, or to sink together.

They agreed, therefore, to an armistice.

While this furious contest raged, the evening had rapidly darkened, and a wind arose—cold and keen. Presently the two men, each keeping his hold with his right hand, raised his left aloft, and shouted for succour.

But they shouted in vain, for the storm advanced, as if it heard, and were summoned by the cry.

The sky grew black and portentously lurid. Thunder began to roll, and the waves, which had hardly moved before the explosion, raised their heads, crested with foam, more turbulently at every instant.

“It is in vain,” said the second man. “Heaven and earth are against us. One or both must perish? Mesmate, shall we go down together?”

At these words the wild devil all at once released his hold of the barrel, by which means the other lost his balance and was suddenly plunged beneath the wave.

His antagonist made quick use of his opportunity. He dashed at the sinking man’s throat in order to drag him entirely under the water; but he caught only his neckerchief, which luckily gave way.

The other, thus murderously assaulted, on finding himself at liberty for an instant, used his time, and sprang upon the barrel; and just as his desperate enemy was hazarding a new attack in a death struggle, he struck him with his clenched fist upon his breast. The savage competitor for life threw up his arms with a cry of wild agony and terror, and fell back beneath the angry waves.

In the moments of mortal agony and conflict human laws cease, for punishments have lost their terrors; even higher laws are then silent. But in the pauses of the struggle the voice of conscience resumes its power, and the heart of man again relents.

As Bertram went rocking over the waves, numbed in body, and exhausted in spirits, all about him hideous gloom, the fitful flames of lightning serving but to reveal the great world of terrors, this inner voice was not silenced; he felt a pang of sorrow at the thought of having destroyed the partner of his misfortunes.

A few minutes had scarcely passed, before he heard a faint, groaning cry arise near him.

Happily at this instant a flash of lightning illuminated the surrounding waste of water, and he descried the antagonist still fighting with the waves, holding by a spar too weak to support his weight, but capable of assisting him in swimming.

His powers were apparently failing him, and as he looked up to his more fortunate enemy, he stretched out his hand to him and cried:

“Stranger, show me this pity. All is over



with me, or in a moment will be. Should you have a happier fate, take from my pocket-book this letter, and convey it to the lady. Oh! if you have ever loved, I beseech you to do this. Tell her that I never ceased to think of her—that I thought of her only when I was at the point of death, and, whatsoever I may have been to man, that to her I have ever been most faithful."

With frantic efforts he strove to unclasp his pocket-book, but could not succeed.

Bertram was deeply touched by the pallid and ghastly countenance of the man, in whose features, however, was a wild, forbidding expression which could not be mistaken, and he said to him:

"Friend, below, if I should have better luck, I will endeavour to execute your commission. Meantime, I can swim. I have now rested myself. Give me your hand. You may come aloft. I will take a turn in the water till I am tired. In this way, by taking turn about, we may both be saved."

"What?" cried the other. "Are you crazy? or are there men such as we read of in books?"

"No matter," said Bertram; "give me your hand, and spring up. I will catch at the barrel when I feel weak."

The other grasped the outstretched hand, and, supporting himself for a few minutes upon his elbows, by the aid of the late passenger on board the "Haleyon," gradually ascended the barrel.

Bertram, on his part, resigning the portmanteau to his companion, slipped off into the waves.

Meanwhile, the storm continued, and the natural darkness of the night was now blended with the darkness of tempest.

After some minutes, the man who was at present in possession of the barrel began thus:

"You fool, below there; are you alive?"

"Yes, but faint. I must catch hold of the barrel again."

"Catch away, then. Do you know anything about the sea hereabouts?"

"No; it was the first time in my life that I was ever on board ship."

The other laughed.

"You don't know it? Well now, I do. I can tell you this: there's no manner of use in our plugging ourselves, and spending the last strength we have in keeping afloat. I know this sea as well as I know my own country. No deliverance is possible. There is not a spot of shore than we can reach—not a point of rock big enough for a sea-mew. We shall enter the fishes' maw, alive or dead."

"It is still possible, if improbable," said the other, "that some humane brother may see us from the shore and come to our assistance."

The other laughed again and said:

"Humane brother, eh? Methinks, my friend, you are rather young in this world of ours, and have no great acquaintance with Master MAN. I know the animal. You may take my word for it that, on such a night as this no living soul will venture out to sea. What man of sense, indeed, would hazard his life for a couple of poor devils like you and me? And suppose he would, who knows but that it might be worse to fall into the hands of some MEN OF SENSE than into the tender mercies of the sea? But I know a trick worth two of that."

"Tell it, then."

"This cask on which I sit, to my knowledge, contains rum, or arrack, which is as good. We can easily knock a hole in it, make ourselves happy and boozy; then we'll fling our arms about each other like brothers and go down together to the bottom. After that, I think we shall neither trouble nor be troubled, for we shall hardly come up again, if we go down groggy."

"Why, that's suicide!"

"Well, is your conscience so delicate and scrupulous? However, as you please, for anything I care, and as you like it better, some ravenous fish may do for us what we might as well have done ourselves. But, now come aloft, my darling; I'll take my turn at swimming, as

long as the state of things will allow it, and wait for you below."

The men changed situations.

But even upon the barrel, Bertram began to feel his powers sinking. He clung as firmly as he could, but the storm grew more and more terrific, and many times he felt faint in his wild descents from the summit of some mountain wave into the yawning cavern below.

Nature is benign even in the midst of her terrors, and when horrors have been accumulated till man can bear no more, then his sufferings are relieved for a time by insensibility.

So it fared with Bertram, who continued to grow fainter and fainter, until at length, in the midst of silent prayer, he finally lost all consciousness.

## CHAPTER II.

### A MYSTERIOUS REFUGE.

WHEN Bertram next awoke from his fainting fit, he heard the sea no longer thundering about him, no longer felt himself tossing upon its waves.

There was darkness all round him, but not the darkness of that awful night when the stormy elements were about him. What first met his eyes was the smoke-obscured interior of a rude hut.

For a long time he stared without consciousness upon the rafters of the ceiling, on which fish and ragged aprons were hung up to dry, and swinging to and fro in the air.

Their monotonous motion, which under other circumstances might have lulled him to sleep, like the ticking of a clock, gradually awoke him to entire consciousness.

The awful scene which he had just passed through, came up to his mind in sudden contrast with that bright moment on the deck of the "Haleyon," in which he had first beheld the coast of Wales lying in the sunshine before him.

His thoughts soon took a coherent arrangement; though he could not yet make out the connection between the barrel on which he had navigated the ocean and his present bed, nor between that fearful night abroad and the dried herrings and patched aprons which now dangled above him.

His thoughts, however, gave way at this moment to anxiety about his portmanteau. This, to his great satisfaction, he found beneath his head, and he now turned his attention to the objects about him.

The cottage was of that humble order which, were then found chiefly at the extremity of the Scotch Highlands, and tenanted by a race of paupers who gained a scanty subsistence from the limpets and other marine products which they took at low water.

The frame-work of the hovel was rudely put together of undressed pine boughs; the walls were a mixed composition of clay, turf, seaweed, mussel shells, and flints; timbers had been laid for the main beams of the ceiling, but they were not connected by joists, nor covered in, so that the view was left open to the summit of the roof, which, composed of sedge and moss, allowed a passage to the wind and rain.

In the little room were hanging all kinds of utensils, but in so confused an arrangement and in so dubious a light that Bertram could make out but little of what he saw.

The sole light in the hut proceeded from a fire in a corner. But this fire was so sparingly fed that it seldom blazed up or shot forth a tongue of flame, except when a draught of wind swept through; which, however, happened very frequently. The smoke escaped much less through the chinks of the wall, enveloping every object in dusky shade and deepening gloom.

Perfect gloom reigned around him, and no living creature appeared to be near.

But once, when the fire happened to shoot forth a livelier gleam, the clouds of smoke parted and discovered a female countenance, old, and with striking features, and a pair of large, dark grey eyes fixed upon a cauldron. As the smoke collected in a corner into fantastic wreaths, she pursued it with her eyes, and a smile played over her withered cheeks, but when it dispersed

or escaped through the chinks, a low muttering, and sometimes a moaning, might be distinguished.

She had, as Bertram observed, a spinning-wheel between her feet; but busy as her hands seemed, and mechanically in motion, it was evident that she did little or no work.

At intervals she sang; but what she sang was more like a low muttered chant than a regular song; at least, Bertram understood not a word of it, if words they were, that escaped her.

After one of these chants the old woman rose suddenly from her seat, wrung her hands, seemed to trace strange circles in the air, and then scattered some substance into the fire, which raised a sudden burst of flame that curled over the cauldron, lit up the house for a few moments, and then went roaring up the chimney, leaving all in greater darkness than before.

During these few moments, however, Bertram had time to observe the whole appearance of the woman with some distinctness. She seemed to have the stature of a well-grown man; but her flesh had fallen away so remarkably that the red frieze gown which she wore hung in loose folds about her.

Much as Bertram was shocked at first by the spectacle of her harsh, bony lineaments, her fiery eye, and her grey, dishevelled hair, he yet perceived in her face traces of former beauty. She raised her bony arms, as if in supplication, to that quarter of the room where Bertram was lying. He perceived, however, that it was not himself, but some object near him which drew her attention.

To his great alarm he now discovered close to himself a chair—the only one in the room—and sitting upon it some motionless figure in the attitude of a living man.

The old woman stretched out her hands with more and more earnestness to this object, as though she looked for some sign from it; but, receiving none, she struck her hands violently together in a transport of rage, upset the spinning-wheel, and fell back into her seat.

If Bertram had at first felt compassion in witnessing the expression of her grief and the anguish of her expectation, this feeling was soon put to flight by the frantic explosion of anger which followed.

So great was his consternation that he resolved to attempt escaping unobserved from the cottage; and he first hoped to recover his full self-possession when he should find himself at liberty in the open air.

With this intention, it may be readily imagined how much his consternation was increased on finding himself unable to stir either hand or foot.

His head even moved with diffidulty, and it seemed as though no faculty had been left unaffected but that of eyesight, which served but to torment him by bringing before him this mysterious scene of terror.

He could almost have wished to exchange his present situation for his recent exposure to the fury of the elements. He next closed his eyes and attempted to sleep, but found himself unable to do so.

Two long hours afterwards he heard a knocking at the door, and sat up.

(To be continued.)

THE BLIND ELEPHANT.—We find another incident to be added to the many already on record about the sagacity of the elephant: An elephant in Calcutta, completely blinded by a disease of the eyes, was treated with nitrate of silver, and gave a most extraordinary roar at the acute pain which it occasioned. The application partially restored the animal's sight, and the next day, when he heard the doctor's voice, he lay down of himself, placed his enormous head on one side, curled up his trunk, drew his breath just like a man about to endure an operation, gave a sigh of relief when it was over, and then by trunk and gesture evidently wished to express his gratitude.

## THE READER'S BOOK-MARKER.

## THE STORY OF "ROMEO AND JULIET."

The Italian novel of "*La Giuletta*," is known to be the original source of Shakspeare's "*Romeo and Juliet*."

It was written by Luigi da Porta, a gentleman of Vicenza, and was first published in 1635, some time after the death of the author. Subsequent editions bore the title of "*A Story of Two Noble Lovers*, with their piteous death, which happened in the City of Verona, in the time of Signor Bartolomeo della Scala."

The history of its English versions may be found in Malone's Shakspeare, forming the first note to the play of "*Romeo and Juliet*," its connection with which is sufficient to give the English reader an interest in this production.

Luigi da Porta seems to have been a person of chivalrous habits and feelings. He attached an epistle to his work, addressed, "*Alla bellissima e leggiadra Madonna Lucina Savorgnana*," in which he states that the tale in question was narrated to him by "*a brave and experienced soldier, who was for ever in love*," "*one day as they were riding towards Udino, which route was then extremely solitary, and entirely ruined and burnt up by the war.*"

Such little notices present a lively picture of the times.

In one of the old numbers of a critical journal of Italy, the "*Biblioteca Italiana*," there is an interesting article on a superb reprint of this work, from the imperial printing office at Milan. The critic first observes, that the novel itself is highly esteemed by Italian scholars for "*its golden simplicity, and true elegance of style*," while "*its perusal has always been sufficient to move the feelings*." An artist of great merit, named Giambattista Gigola, produced this edition, which consisted of but six copies, on parchment, at £50 a copy; and the extraordinary embellishments, judging by the account given of this price in the Italian review, made it cheap at this price.

Mr. Gigola attracted the particular attention of Beaumanoir, and the court of the kingdom of Italy, under that viceroy, by his extraordinary merit in miniature painting; and his object, in these six books, was to give a signal proof to what perfection his art could be carried.

The art of embellishing books, however, with such designs, has always been a favourite one in Italy, since the age of illuminated manuscripts. We have ourselves seen in the library at Florence some most exquisite miniatures in old works of poetry and history; and, amongst others, a very beautiful one of Laura, the mistress of Petrarch, which appropriately graced the poems of her lover. Mr. Gigola had devoted particular attention to the Arabesque ornaments suitable to the embellishment of books, and the Marquis Triulzi of Milan used to have a copy of Boccaccio enriched by the talents of this artist. The drawings are not the same in the different copies, but are, on the contrary, varied in each. A copy of the book once in the possession of the Marquis of Triulzi contains a drawing of the ball in the house of Giuletta, at which commenced the unhappy passion of the "*due nobili amanti*," and the reviewer is profuse in his praises of the beauty, delicacy, and invention of this morsel. The movements of the dancers, he says, are exquisitely given.

## A LADY OF FASHION IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD IV.

We give below an extract from the journal of a young lady of fashion, in the fifteenth century, extracted from an ancient MS. preserved in Drummond Castle. It is that of the celebrated Elizabeth Woodville, previous to her marriage with Lord Grey. She was afterwards Queen to Edward IV., and died in confinement at Southwark, in the reign of Henry VII.

"Monday morning.—Rose at four o'clock, and

helped Catherine to milk the cows, Rachel, the other dairymaid, having scalded her hand in so dreadful a manner the night before. Made a poultice for Rachel, and gave Robin a penny to get something from the apothecary.

"Six o'clock.—The buttock of beef too much boiled, and beer a little of the stalest.

"Seven o'clock.—Went to walk with the lady my mother in the courtyard. Fed twenty-five men and women. Chid Roger severely for expressing some ill will at attending us with broken meat.

"Eight o'clock.—Went to the paddock behind the house with my maid Dorothy; caught Thump, the little pony, myself, and rode a matter of six miles without saddle or bridle.

"Ten o'clock.—Went to dinner. John Grey, a most comely youth—but what is that to me? A virtuous maiden should be entirely under the direction of her parents. John ate but little, and stole a great many tender looks at me; said women would never be handsome, in his opinion, who were not good-natured. I hope my temper is not intolerable; nobody finds fault with it except Roger, and he is the most disorderly serving man in the family. John Grey loves white teeth; my teeth are of a pretty good colour, I think; and my hair is as black as jet, though I say it; and John's, if I mistake not, is of the same colour.

"Eleven o'clock.—Rose from table; the company all desirous of walking into the fields. John Grey would lift me over every stile, and twice he squeezed my hand with vehemence. I cannot say I should have any objection to John Grey; he plays at prison bars as well as any country gentleman, and is remarkably dutiful to his parents, my lord and lady, and never misses church on Sunday.

"Three o'clock.—Poor Farmer Robinson's house burnt by accidental fire. John Grey proposed a subscription among the company for the relief of the farmer. Gave no less than four pounds for this benevolent intent. Mem.: Never saw him look so comely as at this moment.

"Four o'clock.—Went to prayers.

"Six o'clock.—Fed the hogs and poultry.

"Seven o'clock.—Supper on the table; delayed till that hour on account of Farmer Robinson's misfortune. Mem.: The goose pie too much baked, and the pork roasted to rags.

"Nine o'clock.—The company fast asleep; these late hours very disagreeable. Said my prayers a second time; John Grey distracted my thoughts too much the first time; fell asleep, and dreamed of John Grey."

THE LOVE OF POWER.—It is, perhaps, an interesting trait of that "*acquisitiveness*," as Gall would call it, that forms so great a portion of the ambition of conquerors, that Cortes loved rich jewels; and though he was a gentleman by birth and his dress was simple, he wore in his bonnet clasp stones of incredible value. Cæsar, Suetonius says, liked to balance in his hand large pearls.

Nothing is more curious than the use Atheists and Freethinkers make of science in their attacks upon all forms of religious belief. Can that demonstrate chance which shows that nothing is left to chance? If chance created and carried out the details of human government, regulating, without our interference, the making and executing of our laws, the productions and ordinary operations of trade and commerce, inventions, manufactures, clothing, education, health, sickness, social pleasures, etc., then indeed we might reasonably conclude that chance performed the same operations in every phase of natural organization. But as it is not so with us, why should it be so with all the rest of creation? What is there illogical, inconsistent, superstitious, or unreasonable in believing that the faint and imperfect echo of divine wisdom, human intelligence, which governs imperfectly, indicates most clearly the presence of a much higher and more powerful intelligence of which science demonstrates the wonderfully perfect government?—A. H. W.

## SCIENCE.

## BREATHING AND SINGING.

Of the several different organs which make up the vocal apparatus none play a more important part than the lungs, or bellows, so to speak, of the human musical instrument. All true acts of singing are founded not only upon the proper appreciation of the physiological action of the respiratory organs, but also upon their correct use.

The master who, at the outset of his teachings, neglects to impress his pupil with the importance of this subject, performs a grievous error, and one that cannot fail to engender in the pupil divers faulty habits.

Let us glance for a moment at the anatomy of the pulmonary organs.

The lungs are two in number, placed one in each side of the chest, separated from each other by the heart and several large blood-vessels. Each lung is shaped like a cone, the apex of which is just above the collar-bone, and the base at the lower part of the chest. The base of each lung rests on a large, flat muscle, the diaphragm or great respiratory muscle to which I shall shortly allude.

The right lung is the largest; it is broader than the left owing to the inclination of the heart on the left side. The weight of both lungs together is about forty-two ounces, the right lung being two ounces heavier than the left.

The substance of the lungs is of a light, porous, spongy texture; it is highly elastic, and is capable of great inflation. It is chiefly composed of little sacks called air cells, which are banded together by membrane. The air cells are communicated with by an innumerable number of tubes, along which the air travels. At first these tubes are very minute, but as they proceed upwards they join together, becoming larger and larger until they ultimately verge into two large passages, styled the bronchial tubes, and these, in turn, become united, forming the wind-pipe.

What I chiefly wish to impress upon the minds of my readers is, that the lungs are highly elastic and capable of being greatly distended by proper habits of inflation.

The respiratory movements of the chest are two-fold: expansion during inspiratory acts and collapse during expiration. The expansion is effected by two sets of muscles. First, the diaphragm, which is a large, flat muscle, placed like a partition between the chest and abdomen; second, the intercostals, a series of muscles which are attached to the sides of the ribs, and have the power to elevate these bodies.

Let us picture to ourselves a person breathing in the normal manner. The first thing we notice is that beautiful symmetry of motion which poets have so often described. There are no spasmodic movements of any kind, as the air fills the lungs, the chest gradually swells in front and on either side, and the abdomen becomes distended and bulges out, caused, as I have already stated, by the descent of the diaphragm during contraction. The female figure, during repose, and when divested of all modern inventions of torture in the way of dress, presents a superb illustration of the normal respiratory movements.

An artificial contrivance, styled the "*Sleeping Beauty*," was exhibited some years since, and which, no doubt, many of my readers have seen, that wonderfully simulated the movements of the human frame, which I have but faintly described.

Now let us look upon another picture, namely, that of a person breathing in an unnatural or false manner. The first thing which we notice, and which the keen examiner can never fail to observe, is that the collar-bones and shoulder-blades are rhythmically elevated and depressed, the first act taking place during inspiration, and the latter during expiration. The next thing we see is that the lower portion of the chest, instead of expanding during the inflation of the



lungs, that is, during inspiration, actually becomes depressed and drawn in. If we look further down, we will likewise notice that the abdomen becomes greatly flattened. Let us examine more closely these different acts, and see if we can find out their several causes. The elevation and depression of the shoulders during respiration is caused by the traction of several large muscles, which unite the two bones above-mentioned to the sides and back of the neck. These muscles should have nothing to do with healthy ordinary breathing, and their employment in such acts is an indication that there is some obstacle in the way. In extraordinary respiration, such as accompanies or follows undue exercise or exertion of any kind, the assistance of these muscles is invoked, in order that the lungs may speedily be filled with air; and here we can see the upward and downward movements of the shoulders in a marked degree.

In some diseases of the chest, particularly asthma, the muscles of the neck are taxed in a remarkable degree during the gaspings of the sufferer for breath.

The flattening of the front wall of the chest is mostly marked at the lower part, that is, at the site of the diaphragm muscle. It is caused by a forced relaxation of the diaphragm.

As the expansion and retraction of the lungs are regulated solely by the movements of the diaphragm, it follows that the pulmonary organs are retracted in proportion to the relaxation of this muscle. The drawing in of the abdomen is caused in the same manner as the last-mentioned deformity, by the undue relaxation of the diaphragm.

The evil effects that are sure to follow in the footsteps of improper habits of breathing are of a two-fold nature:

First—The injury to or possible loss of the voice.

Second—An impairment of the health of the body.

Before we consider these points let us lay open, as it were, the chest wall, and watch the lungs of a person breathing falsely. The keen examiner will first notice that the air, as it rushes into the lungs, instead of permeating every minute air cell and inflating them as it does in correct breathing, thereby causing the lungs to expand and swell out, enters only the cells situated in the upper half of the pulmonary organs.

What is the direct effect of this? Why, there is constantly present in the lower part of the lungs a vast quantity of air, which, remaining unchanged, soon becomes greatly vitiated by the foul gases of the body which have only this channel of egress, and, as a direct consequence, the whole body becomes contaminated and finally diseased by the direct poisoning of the blood.

The next thing likely to be observed is that the lower half of both lungs, instead of swelling up, become greatly retracted.

The failure to distend is due to the fact that the air, or inflating agent, cannot effect an entrance on account of the non-contraction of the diaphragm muscle.

If the case be a marked one, the respiratory acts will be performed in a spasmodic or jerky manner, on account of the forced action of the muscles of the neck, instead of in that easy and graceful manner so characteristic of correct breathing.

Did it ever occur to the tightly-laced belle that she is only making use of one-half of her breathing apparatus, and that by so doing she is gradually sowing in her system the seeds of incurable diseases? Perhaps this one cause alone, were the actual truths ascertained, would account for a great many of the sudden deaths which, as we all know, have been alarmingly prevalent during the past few years.

A good healthy action of the lungs has more to do with longevity than that of any other branch of the human organism.

The direct effect of false breathing upon the voice is the production of improper or faulty tones. The more remote effect is an utter loss to the singing voice.

The vocal cords, the delicate reeds whose action produces all sound in the larynx, or human voice-box, are the bodies against which all currents of air, as they are forced up by the lung into and through the windpipe, impinge. The air, as it comes from below, rushes through the larynx, and sets the two cords into vibration, which produces a note corresponding in pitch according to the velocity of the air current and the tension of the cords.

When the lungs, or bellows, of the vocal instrument are made use of in the correct manner, the air current passes through the glottis or space intervening between the vocal cords in a steady and reliable stream, the force of which varies, as already stated, according to the pitch of the desired note, and the cords are enabled through practice to instinctively gauge this force, and prepare themselves for its reception, so that no harm can result from the air striking them in the above manner.

On the contrary, when a pair of lungs are acting abnormally or incorrectly, the air current proceeding therefrom passes through the larynx in a jerky and unreliable stream, which cannot fail to be productive of injury.

The vocal cords are often attacked by these spasmodic acts of breathing when totally unprepared for their reception, and as a consequence suffer strain, the forerunner of nine-tenths of the cases of loss of singing voice commonly met with.

In the consideration of these two varieties of breathing—the true and the false—we must not lose sight of the fact that those employing the former method can imbibe nearly double the quantity of air that the ones making use of the latter style of breathing can.

The untutored ear might not discover much difference in the vocalizations of these two classes of singers, during the performance of some simple piece which would require very little exertion of the breathing apparatus for its rendition; but the most unskilled could not fail to notice the difference during the singing of a difficult work, especially one interspersed with long running passages.

The true breather has seemingly no trouble in giving forth these difficult passages. She is enabled beforehand to inspire a sufficient quantity of air to carry her successfully to the end, and she is enabled, by long practice, to tell to a nicety the exact quantity of air necessary for the performance of any given passage, every note of which is rendered in an equally clear and brilliant manner. The false breather can never foretell the amount of air necessary for the performance of any long passage, and even if she had the requisite knowledge, it would be of little service to her, for the simple reason that the portion of her pulmonary organs which she makes use of is not sufficient to hold the required amount of air. As a consequence, she is obliged to make an effort at inspiration before the completion of one of these passages, which, of course, will destroy all the beauty and effect it might otherwise have given.

I shall pass over the many diseases that might be produced by improper pulmonary action, and treat of the causes of this pernicious style of breathing.

Of the several different agents that prevent proper inflation of the lungs, the manner of dress holds the first rank. She who has set up the triumphs of the lyric stage as the goal of her ambition must cast off the foibles of fashion, or else her efforts will be entirely useless. The garments which encircle the waist and chest must be loose, in order that the expansion of the lungs be not interfered with. This method of dressing must be rigidly adhered to, if the singer would avoid disastrous consequences.

If the reader has carefully followed me through this article, the necessity of following this rule will be most patent to him; for if the breathing apparatus be confined it is impossible for air to enter and inflate it in the proper manner.

Improper posturing of the body has also a great deal to do with false acts of breathing. If the vocalist forms habits of stooping or bending the shoulders forward during singing,

he will soon begin to use his lungs improperly.

In order that singing be correctly performed, it is absolutely necessary for the artist to stand erect, have his shoulders well thrown back, and his chin slightly inclined upwards. The person occupying this position places his lungs in the most favourable position for the reception of air, and if there are no obstructions in the way, such as tight articles of clothing, he cannot help but inflate the respiratory to the fullest extent, if he so desires.

Immoderate acts of eating and drinking, by keeping the stomach in an overloaded and distended condition, form serious obstacles to correct breathing. As the gastric organ lies immediately underneath the diaphragm or respiratory muscle, it will, unless it be nearly empty, prevent the action of this most important muscular body. This will explain the reason why it is almost impossible to sing immediately after partaking of a meal.

There are many different ways in which habits of improper breathing may be overcome, the most important of which are judicious breathing exercises, gymnastic studies, particularly those which bring into play the muscles of the chest, and a strict observance of the posturing of the upper portion of the body at all times.

DR. G. WHITFIELD WARD.

## THE HOUSEWIFE.

**ARROWROOT CUSTARDS.**—Four eggs; one dessertspoonful of arrowroot; one pint of milk: sweetened and flavoured to your taste.

**ARROWROOT PUDDING.**—Mix two tablespoonfuls of arrowroot with a little milk; then pour it into a pint of boiling milk, stirring it; and when cold add four eggs, some sugar, brandy or ratifia; boil it in a basin, and put a buttered paper over the top.

**APPLE JELLY.**—One pound of apples pared and cored; one pound of lump sugar put to a quarter of a pint of water, so as to clarify the sugar; add some lemon-peel; it must then be boiled until it is stiff; put it into a mould, when cold turn it out. If there is any difficulty in getting it out, the mould may be just put in warm water. This is a cheap and pretty looking jelly.

**TEA CAKES.**—Melt in milk two ounces of butter; mix with it a pound of flour; add one egg and a spoonful of yeast; make up the dough in small round cakes; flatten them a little; bake them on a buttered tin. These cakes are intended to be buttered and eaten hot.

**GERMAN PUFFS.**—A quarter of a pound of almonds beat well in a mortar with a little wine or cream, six eggs, three whites, three spoonfuls and a half of flour, half a pint of cream, quarter of a pound of butter; sweeten to your taste; butter your cups, and bake them half an hour; this quantity makes twelve puffs in middle-sized tea cups.

**BEEFSTEAK AND OYSTER PIE.**—Beat the steak gently with a rolling-pin, and season it with pepper and salt. Have ready a deep dish, lined with not too rich a pastry. Put in the meat, with layers of oysters; then the oyster liquor, with a little mace and a teaspoonful of catsup; cover with the top crust, and bake. Veal may be used instead of beef, if preferred.

**RABBIT PIE.**—Skin two rabbits, wash them thoroughly, and cut them into small joints. Have ready some lean bacon, and one pound of rump or beef steak; cut both into small pieces, place them all on a large dish, or on a chopping board; sprinkle them with salt, pepper, chopped parsley, and thyme; mix all well together, and put them in the pie dish, adding force meat balls, or the yolks of hard-boiled eggs. Fill the dish with water, cover the whole with a light paste, beat up an egg, with a pinch of salt, glaze the pie with it, and bake in a hot oven two hours.

## POWER AND POVERTY.

A NEW NOVEL.

(BY OWEN LANDOR.)

## CHAPTER XL.

WHAT COULD PART THEM?

The hour is fading! it has fled,  
And I am left in darkness now,  
A wanderer towards a lonely bed—  
The grave, that home of all below.

As the police officer's hand fell upon his shoulder, the living man looked up, but not even then could Mr. Inspector tell which of the twins was he. The one stretched out in the coldness of death was the more placid of the two, but the likeness remained as strong as ever.

"Which are you?" the officer asked. "Dan or Jim?"

"Dan is dead," was the reply, given in a strangely monotonous tone, that had to the ear a twang of indifference in it.

"Then you are Jim, and I want you to tell me what has happened to your brother," said Mr. Inspector.

"I brought him home," said Jim, looking around the room like one dazed or just awakened from sleep, "and he was uncommon heavy, to be sure. He kept talking part of the way, and said I hurt him. Then he turned quiet, and he ain't spoke since. Do you think he's dead?"

"It looks like it," said Mr. Inspector, in a low voice, as he gently pressed down the eyelids of the dead man. "You brought him from Deerlands—Sir Newton Thurlie's place—didn't you?"

"Dan was all for it, but I was agin it," replied Jim, vaguely. "I thought no good would come o' going there; but Dan said it must be done or we should have to give the money back."

"What must be done?" asked the officer.

"The count, I think he was a count, told us that he was alive when we thought he was dead, and got a thousand pounds for finding the body. But we found the wrong man."

"Then you thought you would kill the right man, and so make yourselves safe?"

Jim nodded.

"That's jest it," he said.

"Ah! that was the game," thought Mr. Inspector, "and not robbery after all. Who'd have thought it of 'em. So cunning of the count, too. I begin to see my way clear now. It was clever of him to try to get these men to do his dirty work."

"But do you think he's dead?" said Jim, who had been attentively regarding his brother's face while Mr. Inspector was soliloquising.

"Oh, he's dead enough, poor fellow."

"And yet it does look like sleep. Are you sure?"

"He'll take a long nap this time," said Mr. Inspector, gently; "but now I must talk to you."

"Ay," said Jim, "talk if you like. I don't mind."

"You don't seem to mind anything, much; you take the death of your brother uncommon cool—and a twin, too. It's surprising."

Jim looked up into his face with a curious expression, which Mr. Inspector could not understand. These twins had been a puzzle to him from the first, and were to remain so to the end.

"I must take you into custody, my man," he said, "on a charge of housebreaking. Sorry to do it, but duty's duty, and I can't give way to my feelings."

"Very well," said Jim, simply, "we will go with you."

"You can come with me, but we must leave your brother here till we can send the right parties to look after him," said the officer.

"Oh, but we can't be separated," said Jim, with a resolute look; "we've been all our lives together, and so we must keep."

"That's nonsense, Jim; come, you must."

"I tell you I won't. You may kill me—tear me in shreds first."

"What? would you show fight?"

"Yes, I would," cried Jim, seizing a chair.

"Don't come near me unless you'll promise to take us together."

"I tell you it can't be done," said Mr. Inspector. "Put down that chair."

"I won't."

He looked as determined as a wild beast at bay. Every hair on his head seemed to bristle, and his eyes flashed like those of a fury. His lips were set, and he plainly meant mischief.

"This is unseemly," said Mr. Inspector, in an argumentative tone. "Think of your brother lying here and you going on in this way. It isn't right, you know. Better come along."

"Will you take us together?"

"Don't I tell you it can't be done. You can walk along with me, but he can't. It is not reason."

"I won't go without him," cried Jim, wildly.

"Don't I tell you that we can't be parted?"

"I'll see about that," muttered Mr. Inspector, now losing his patience a little; and stepping to the window he tapped it sharply.

A few moments afterwards the heavy footstep of the patrol was heard on the stairs, and the man entered the room.

A few whispered words ensued, and then they suddenly pounced upon Jim, who struck one fierce blow, knocking off the helmet of the patrol, and then was overpowered. The handcuffs were slipped over his wrists, and he was a prisoner.

Then he became suddenly calm and fixed his eyes upon his brother's face—not with much visible expression, perhaps, but far down in their depths there was a world of sorrow. He no longer resisted, but when the patrol took him by the arm he quietly left the room.

But his head was turned back and his eyes fixed upon his dead brother to the last.

"A rum pair," thought Mr. Inspector, as he went about the house locking up the different doors and places, and taking note of the keys so that he might be able to use them again with facility; "a very rum pair; but there—all the world is rum."

When all was as safe as lock and key could make them, he joined the patrol and prisoner, who were waiting for him outside. Mr. Inspector, being rather tired, mounted the patrol's horse, and gave his inferior the opportunity of walking back to the station with the prisoner. It was a three mile tramp, but during the journey Jim never looked at them or uttered a word.

Once, when about midway, he suddenly pulled up and turned his eyes back in the direction of the inn, like one who suddenly remembers something he has left behind, but the check was only momentary, and he resumed his walk with the curious, quiet look upon him that so puzzled Mr. Inspector.

"Rough chaps, both of 'em," thought that functionary, "and of course there isn't much feeling in them."

They got Jim to the station, and the charge was entered against him; but to the query, if he wished to make a statement, he uttered not a word. He was put into a cell and asked if he wanted anything to eat or drink, but still he did not speak.

So they left him, and Mr. Inspector busied himself for the next hour or two in making all the needful preparations for an inquest upon Dan, and to have Jim examined before the magistrate that morning. He did not propose to trouble the people at Deerlands that day, but simply to put in his own statement and ask for a remand.

By twelve o'clock all was arranged.

The surgeon, accompanied by a police officer, went over to see the dead man. One of those horrible old women, who make it their business to lay out the dead, had been despatched to the same place; the coroner had been communicated with, and two magistrates had promised to sit at noon, which meant any time between one and three.

A little before two o'clock it was announced that the magistrates had arrived, and Mr. Inspector went down to the cell to take charge of his prisoner. He unlocked the door and called to him by name. There was no answer.

"Come, my man," he said, "you must give up the sullen game. Come off that bench."

Jim was lying full length upon the bench that was fixed to the wall on one side of the cell; but he did not move. Mr. Inspector stepped in and shook him roughly by the shoulders. But still he did not stir.

"Why, what is this?" said the officer. "Reverse, bring a light here."

One of the men brought an office candle, and Mr. Inspector, taking it from him, held it up above the face of Jim. His eyes were only half-closed, but there was a placid look upon it that smoothed away the ruggedness, and made it almost beautiful.

It is strange that in death all the evil that men wear in their faces should die out and leave only the better part of them expressed upon the features. But so it is; and poor Jim was dead.

What did he die of?

Some will say of a broken heart, for assuredly it was not by poison or by violence, or in any way by his own hand. With Dan's death some chord that we know not of, nor can understand in any way, had been snapped, and quietly and unseen the spirit of Jim had passed away.

Mr. Inspector could make nothing of the spectacle presented by this phenomenal ending of a prisoner. He could only look solemn and shake his head, which is the way of preternaturally wise men when they have found a nut too hard for them to crack.

They wish it to be understood that they are not at all puzzled, but could find out all about it if they wished, but either cannot spare the time or think it would be folly to waste their precious energies on such a subject. It is a matter of much mystery, but of no real moment.

So Mr. Inspector turned away from the cell, without making any remark to his subordinate, but to himself he repeated the observation he had made that morning:

"A rum pair," he murmured; "a very rum pair, to be sure. But all this world is rum, and there's an end of it. What's the good of bothering?"

## CHAPTER XLII.

LIGHT AGAIN.

Then thou hast seen us in that hour:

When every nerve of life was new.

When Pleasure fanned youth's infant power,

And Hope her witcheries round it threw.

THE interview between Inspector Fawcett, Mr. Cranbury, and David Gray was not a long one, but it was pregnant with much matter of importance. The merchant learned the almost incredible tidings that his son, whom he had mourned as dead, whom he had, as he believed, followed to the grave, was yet alive, and he found the tidings as hard to bear as the great shock that came with the news of his death.

"Here is the description of the man they have at Deerlands," said Fawcett, and read it aloud.

It tallied with the well-known features of Jack, with the exception of the signs of sickness which were inevitable after what he had suffered.

Mr. Cranbury was literally stunned, and could only sit and stare about him. But for the prompt action of David Gray, alarming and fatal results might have ensued. But the hitherto careless clerk—the devotee to bitter beer—came out very strong as a man to be trusted in the time of need; and, first loosening the merchant's neckcloth, he rushed to a sideboard, where he found a decanter of brandy and glasses.

Filling one for Mr. Cranbury he forced it down his throat, and seeing that it had the desired effect, he took one himself, feeling that he, too, wanted a little artificial nerve, and gave a third to the officer, in case he should want it; but



for all the effect it had on him it might as well have been thrown into a barrel.

"If it should prove to be my son!" exclaimed Mr. Cranbury, as soon as he could speak. "But that must be known at once. Suspense is intolerable."

"We ought to go down to Deerland," said David Gray.

"The best course," consented the officer, "and I will go with you. There will be some expense in taking me, of course, sir; but I don't think you are the man to think of that."

"Spend all I have!" was the merchant's answer, "if you give me back my son."

Mrs. Cranbury had to be informed, and Janet, too. They were both terribly agitated, but had no need of brandy. Women are so much better in an emergency like that than the generality of men. They both declared their intention to join the party, and would take no refusal.

It was too late to take an ordinary train that night, but Mr. Cranbury would hear of no delay. He ordered a special train; and David Gray, ever thoughtful of everybody, thought of Mrs. Murch and Ben Tomkins.

"One is the mother and the other the sweetheart of the girl," he said, "and they will both be in an agitated state until we can send them word of the truth."

"They had better go with us," said Mr. Cranbury. "I'll send a servant for them."

"I'll go myself," said David, "and meet you at the station. I'll be there as soon as possible after midnight."

"So be it," consented Mr. Cranbury.

David Gray first sought out Tomkins, who as soon as he heard what he was wanted for fell into a state of fluttering excitement, and was ready to set fire to his house, if desired to do so, to form a fitting bonfire to celebrate the occasion.

"It's Peggy, right enough," he said. "I dreamt last night that I should never see her again, and dreams always go by contraries."

By the time they got to Mrs. Murch's house, that lady was in bed, but not sleeping, and the first tap at the door brought her to the window.

"Who is it?" she cried. "Not Job?"

"No; better than Job, in one way," replied Ben Tomkins. "We've found Peggy alive and well, and we want to take you to her."

"What a blundering booby you are!" said David Gray, as Mrs. Murch disappeared from the window and measured her length on the floor in her first and probably her last fainting fit. "Do you think that everybody's nerves are like yours—as tough as the sinews of an ox?"

Mrs. Murch, however, came out of her swoon with almost as much haste as she went into it, and having attired herself in a style that would have enured her being looked up as a lunatic if she showed herself in the street, she came down and let them in.

When David Gray told her the news, quietly holding Ben Tomkins by the collar as he did so, to keep that excited greengrocer from dancing about, Mrs. Murch fell into another flutter, but she was ready in ten minutes to go to the world's end, having all that she needed, down to a change of clothing for Peggy, which she did not want, having been plentifully supplied at Deerland. But Mrs. Murch was one of those women whose minds grasped every detail of things necessary, and if her house had been on fire and the staircase already giving way, she would have taken a few necessities in the way of apparel with her or perished in the attempt.

They were at the terminus by a quarter past twelve, and half an hour later the others arrived. The special train was ready in a few minutes, and away they went, whirling through the darkness of the night on their agitating errand.

Did any of them sleep that night? Nobody, except the officer. His were the only eyes that closed, or showed any intention of doing so, but he is to be excused, on the ground of being no

relation to Jack or Peggy, or in any way interested in them, save in a professional sense.

So he slept quietly in a corner of the saloon carriage, while the others talked away the time without ever changing the theme.

"And to think how blind I must have been!" said Mr. Cranbury; "and how abominably I behaved to your husband, Mrs. Murch! But I'll make it up to him."

"My John don't want it made up to him, sir," replied Mrs. Murch. "He never did blame you; and if it is Peggy he won't want more than her to console him."

"He is a good fellow," said Mr. Cranbury. "and a most invaluable servant; but I must do without him in future, for he must work no more."

"Don't make an idle man of him, sir," cried Mrs. Murch, in terror. "Take away his work and he'll be a dead man in a twelvemonth. The likes of him and me was born to work, and we shall never be happy without it."

Mr. Cranbury did not press the subject, but left it till the time when he should be able to lay his plans before Murch himself; and it may here be said, in anticipation, that he found the old man had no opinion apart from that of his wife. What she said was right, and like a true lover of domestic law he acted up to it.

They were travelling all night, and had the mortification of being stopped two hours at a country station, where some trucks belonging to a luggage train had got off the rails and barred the way. But the obstacle was removed, and they arrived at Pengilly about eight o'clock.

No vehicle was to be had; there never was such a thing as a public conveyance at this most lonesome and primitive of stations; but all were strong, or strung up by excitement, and on foot they wended their way to Deerland.

Sir Newton had not long retired to rest, and the usual order of the house being upset, there was nobody to answer the door until they had rung twice.

Mr. Cranbury asked for Sir Newton and sent up his card. Meanwhile they were ushered into a sitting-room, where a fire was burning.

Only a few minutes were they kept waiting for the baronet, who appeared in dressing-gown and slippers, and offered no needless apology for his appearance.

"Mr. Cranbury," he said, singling out the merchant with his eye, after a general bow to the rest, "you have arrived at a very early hour. Your son—if your son it is—is still sleeping. He has passed a wonderful night, they tell me, and must awake another man."

"But I cannot remain in doubt," said Mr. Cranbury, in an agitated voice.

"You need not," replied Sir Newton. "You will know him sleeping?"

"If there is but the shadow of him left I shall recognise it," said Mr. Cranbury.

"Then come with me," said Sir Newton, "and I must rely upon the patience of his other friends. This is Mrs. Murch, I believe?"

Mrs. Murch favoured him with her company courtesy.

"I recognize you by the likeness your daughter bears to you. You will find her upstairs in a room I will point out to you."

While they were gone the others stood still, not speaking a word or seeming to breathe. Nobody sat down or thought of doing so. They would as soon have thought of going to sleep.

At length, after what appeared to be an age, they heard a quick footstep without, heavy, but youthful, in its buoyancy, and, the door opening, Mr. Cranbury appeared.

His wife rushed into his arms, while Janet kept still, with her eyes fixed.

"It is he—our darling boy!" they heard the merchant say.

And then Janet sank into the arms of David Gray, who had seen that she had borne as much as she could endure then, and was on the verge of a swoon.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE LAST TURN OF THE WHEEL.

And evening spreads her shade around,  
And darkness fills the arch of heaven;  
Now the last sound and murmur's heard,  
And Fancy's parting sigh is given.

It was nearly noon before Jack Cranbury awoke from the long sleep Nature had given him as a restorative, and then Myra, who was entrusted with the mission, gently broke to him the news that his friends had come.

He declared himself ready to see them, and Myra, leaving him, he put on such attire as he had and walked downstairs, meeting Sir Newton on the way, who guided him to the room where all he loved best on earth were to be found.

It would be folly to attempt to describe the meeting, and so we will pass it by. It was a quiet one, their feelings being too deep for much talking; but, by-and-by, they settled down into discussing the past, and David Gray, skillfully piecing this and that together, made the truth as clear to all as it has been to our readers.

Already it was announced at The Hall that Count Orsera had perished. Mr. Inspector had received the report of his patrols, and communicated with the various police offices of the county by wire, and nothing like such a man had been seen.

"It is my belief that it's a case of suicide," said Mr. Inspector. "He saw the end was near, and in sheer desperation scattered himself and all in his house to the four winds."

And this opinion was concurred in by all. Even David Gray said that the count was the man for such a deed, but about those in the house at the time no information could be obtained.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Murch and Peggy had gone to see about Murch's release, Sir Newton accompanying them to offer bail, if necessary; but he did not think it would be needed.

The indignation of Mrs. Murch when she heard her husband was under lock and key was not very demonstrative, but it was intense. She wanted to know what the police were thinking about to lock up a man who was branded all over with the true stamp of honesty, and she put the question to Mr. Inspector, when she was confronted by that gentleman in his office.

His answer was that he had seen many a man with the trade-mark of honesty upon him, but it could never really be trusted, there being so many rogue's brands so uncommonly like it that it was difficult to tell the difference.

Thereupon Mrs. Murch, with her politeness smothered by her anger, expressed an opinion implying that Mr. Inspector was as near being a fool as a man could hope to be in this world, to which he again made answer:

"Well, ma'am, I am as I was made, and you are the same. I did my duty by locking up your husband, and you do yours by sticking to him. I shall be glad to learn he's all right. I've no personal animosity against him."

Half an hour afterwards Murch and Reuben were released on their own recognisances to appear again if called upon; and Reuben, who had never married, regretted his celibacy most bitterly when he saw the meeting between Murch and Peggy. Led away by his emotion, he sought to embrace Mrs. Murch, in a brotherly way, of course, but was promptly repulsed by that energetic woman, who boxed his ears with a force that he deemed incredible.

"And even that was better than nothing," Reuben afterwards said; "for somehow it made me feel as if I was a party to the general rejoicing."

It was a happy time for all; and Sir Newton, who would not hear of Jack's travelling just yet, insisted on their becoming his guests for a few days, with the run of the domestics' part of his house for Murch and his party; and the invitation was accepted by all, even to Ben Tomkins, who recklessly left his business to the care



[IT WAS QUICKLY DONE, AND IN A MINUTE COUNT ORSERA WAS DEAD.]

of his foreman, but was not a great sufferer, after all, the man being fairly honest, and not pocketing more than twenty per cent of the takings.

This stay was the foundation of a lasting friendship between the two families thus strangely brought together; and from that time, when Mr. and Mrs. Strongway wanted a change in town, they stayed at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Cranbury, Junior, who had a substantial, handsome residence erected on the spot where Brocken Hall once stood; and when the Cranburys wanted a run into the country they invariably went to Exmoor.

Ben Tomkins and Peggy were married immediately on their return to town, and Ben, giving up the New Cut business, took a shop in Clapham, where he still lives and thrives, as so good a greengrocer ought to do. Peggy, of course, wanted to be near her old mistress, and was the instigation of the change of residence.

Mr. and Mrs. Murch also reside at Clapham, where they have one lodger, on whom Mrs. Murch waits with a devotion rare in the annals of lodgers; and his name is David Gray.

"It is as good as my own house could have been with such a shiftless fellow as I am," he often says to Mr. Mellor; "and as Mr. Cranbury has been good enough to settle a small annuity upon me, I don't think I have a care."

Murch is still a packer, but not a regular one. He is a sort of irregular superintendent of the packing department of Cranbury, Rose & Co., comes and goes at will, and is a terror and a scourge to the idlers of that department.

The bare fact of his travelling by rail, and having a season ticket, inspires respect; and his knowledge of the art of packing is a barrier to any attempt at scamping their work. Murch is truly a happy man, with all he ever sighed for—good health, and "owing no man ought."

Myra and Edgar Strongway were married soon, about the same time that Jack Cranbury led Janet to the altar. The correspondence of the two brides during their respective honeymoons would be worth reading, it was so full of

the praise of the married state, but unfortunately we have no room to print it here.

Our last words deal with the fate of Count Orsiera. That astute gentleman reached London in safety, and lived there in apparent security, under various disguises and aliases, for nearly a year.

He had the imprudence to send an anonymous letter to Jack Cranbury, telling him of the death of Lord Mowerby and Euphrosia; Pierre he did not condescend to mention; and this settled the question of the young nobleman's disappearance, which had been exercising the minds of many people of late. He, however, took the precaution to add a postscript, stating that as soon as he posted the letter he should start for the Continent.

But he remained in London, knowing it was as good a hiding-place as the world could give him. His last home was in Lant Street, Borough, and his last alias Captain Johnson, of the American Navy.

He had been in this place about a week, when one night, as he sat in his room, he was startled by the sudden and quiet entrance of three men of foreign aspect. They entered swiftly, and one had his hand over his mouth before he could speak.

"Not a word," said the man. "We come from the Chief, who has heard of your treachery!"

He would have struggled for his freedom, but another man pinioned him, and the third put a cord round his neck.

It was quickly done, and in a minute Count Orsiera was dead, having fallen a victim to the Society of Irreconcilables, a band of men scattered all over the world, few in number, perhaps, but strong in purpose to upset the order of things as they are, whatever that order may be.

They want to be without laws, without government, to have all men equal, and all men, idle and industrious, rich alike; but they aim at the impossible, and must for ever fail.

The landlady of the house had been lured out with a false message, and when she came back her lodger was gone.

He had been taken away in a cab, and quietly slipped into the river under the darkness of night to swell the list of those who are "found drowned," without a man or woman to claim them.

So ended the arch conspirator, the murderer, and traitor, who while living had so many names, but in death found a nameless grave.

[THE END.]

#### TRUST NOT IN LOVE!

Oh! heed not Love's sigh—nor his eloquent eye,  
Nor the soft, tender tale he would make you believe;

His sighs and his smiles are but so many wiles,  
Which the artful young urchin has spread to deceive.

Then, trust not in Love!

**BURKE'S FONDNESS FOR CHILDREN.**—Burke was so very fond of children that he would play teetotum and push-pin with them, and apparently take as much delight in the stories of "Jack the Giant-killer" and "Tom Thumb" as themselves. "Half an hour might pass," says Murphy, "during which he would keep speaking in such a way that you could see no more in him than an ordinary man, good naturedly amusing his young auditors, when, some observation or suggestion calling his attention, a remark of the most profound wisdom would slip out, and he would return to his teetotum." It is related of him that one day, after having dined with Fox, Sheridan, Lord John Townsend, and several other eminent men, at Sheridan's cottage, he amused himself by rapidly wheeling his host's little son round the front garden in a child's hand-chaise. While thus employed, the great orator, it is added, evinced by his looks and activity that he enjoyed the sport as much as his delighted playfellow.



## CHANGELESS IN LOVE.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN TWO NUMBERS.)

## CHAPTER IV.

## A LOVER'S PLEADING.

JOHN HESLITINE's face was very pale and grave, and for a moment they looked at each other in silence.

"Why do you spy upon me thus?" cried Margaret, hotly, confronting him.

She knew inwardly that she did him an injustice, but was too angry to weigh her words.

"Your accusation is beneath my notice, Margaret. I have been walking about the wood all the afternoon looking for one of my dogs which is lost, fearing to find him in a trap. Hearing a man's voice, I made my way here, hoping to find one of the keepers, and to inquire about Carlo. I little thought—"

He stopped abruptly, trying to school his voice to cold composure.

But the effort was vain—his feelings mastered him, and he grasped Margaret's arm, as she would fain have moved away.

"Gretchen, I would have died sooner than learn what I have done to-day—rather than see you in that fellow's arms returning his false kisses. Till this afternoon I could bear my trouble like a man, thinking it little wonder that a being so fair and bright had tired of my rough, unworthy self; but to learn that what I once so bitterly blamed myself for suspecting is only too true—O God! how can I bear it?"

He paced to and fro, covering his face in his agony.

Margaret was moved to deep pity for the man who suffered thus keenly for her sake—the more so because she felt she was to blame.

"I am very sorry," she began; then, as if knowing how empty her words must seem, she cried eagerly (all her soul in those grey eyes he had once loved so well): "Oh, John, you do forgive me? He loves me, and I cannot help caring for him, he is so handsome, so clever, and so noble, and to be willing to sacrifice everything for a poor, ignorant girl like me. It seems like the story of King Cophetua and the beggar maiden," she added, with a dreamy, tender look.

"Poor child! And you BELIEVE that he really means to MARRY YOU? Margaret, though I am no longer your lover, will you not treat me as a friend? Tell me—has Lord Pendarrock ever asked you in so many words, to be his wife?" John Heseltine's eyes were bent on her with grave pity.

Margaret flushed angrily, and her lips parted as if to defend her absent lover, but she was silent.

"Ah! it is as I feared, or rather, as I KNEW. Oh, Gretchen! I implore you, while there is yet time, draw back. You do not know, dear, the danger you are in; and, thank God, you are so sweet and innocent, my lost darling, that I cannot explain it to you. But by all you hold sacred, for the sake of your dead mother, your brother Humphrey, and perhaps also for the sake of the love you once bore me, I entreat you, Margaret, have no more to say to Lord Pendarrock."

Few could have resisted such impassioned pleading, and for a moment it reached Margaret's heart.

But the good impulse soon vanished before the strength of her blind passion.

"John Heseltine, it is wicked, mean of you, to say such things. You wrong Lord Pendarrock, and you know it. He cannot marry me, because—because circumstances oblige him to keep our engagement secret for a time. But, of course, he will do so as soon as he can, for I know he loves me very dearly," she added, with a blush.

What could he say or do? She would not believe him. How could he rescue her from the bitter awakening which must come?

She broke in upon the silent anguish of his thoughts, asking, eagerly:

"You will keep our secret, John?"

"You need not fear me," was all he replied.

Then, raising his hat with quiet dignity, he turned and left her, walking in an opposite direction, as she, without glancing back, took the little path which led towards Plas Dynwdd.

His soul was filled with one all-absorbing idea—to the utter abnegation of self. How could he save her?

## CHAPTER V.

## A STAB IN THE DARK.

THE stolen visits to the wood, notes exchanged under cover of books and music lent and returned, and clandestine meetings, still continued between Lord Pendarrock and Margaret L'Estrange. They fancied their secret unknown, but in a small village like Plas Dynwdd the most carefully guarded mystery is sure to leak out little by little.

Lord Pendarrock's position, however, and the fact that many of the inhabitants owed their daily bread to the wages he paid them, prevented any very open or scandalous gossip.

But the vague hints and veiled innuendoes which met John Heseltine on every side—the semi-satirical condolence with which he was greeted—drove him almost mad.

He once tried to speak on the subject to Humphrey; but the gentle, abstracted schoolmaster was deaf to his anxieties, being deep in a new treatise on chemistry, his favourite study.

"You must be mistaken, Heseltine. Margaret is a good girl, and I can trust her. Perhaps your natural vexation that she has broken off her engagement prejudices you. I am very sorry for it; but there is no accounting for a woman's whims and fancies."

And, donning his blue spectacles, worthy Humphrey was soon again engrossed in his pamphlet.

John Heseltine shrugged his shoulders and walked away in despair.

The wild idea of openly confronting Lord Pendarrock, and taxing him with his base behaviour, occurred to him, and he had almost made up his mind to act thus when help arrived from an unexpected quarter.

He was returning one day from harvesting, when one of the village children thrust a note into his hand.

He patted the head of the flaxen-haired little one, and diving into the pocket of his velvet coat, tossed her a ruddy apple, with which she ran away in high glee; for in spite of his own troubles the young farmer was always kind to those about him, especially children and animals.

Mechanically he opened the note. He started when he saw the handwriting.

"WILL you come to the School Cottage at seven this evening? I want to speak to you particularly. MARGARET L'ESTRANGE."

"Can she want my help? Has she at last discovered the fatal mistake she has been making all this while?" he thought, with a strange thrill of joy. But it was only momentary. "Ah, no, I dare not hope that! However, I will go."

Would he not have gone through fire and water for her sake? Even though she had proved false to him.

"THE writer of this, who has a sincere regard for Miss L'Estrange's welfare, yet who wishes to remain unknown, cannot see her standing upon the brink of a fearful precipice without stretching out a warning hand. Miss L'Estrange thinks that she possesses Lord Pendarrock's whole heart; that for the sake of the love he bears her, he would be willing to sacrifice caste, honour and position, and make her his wife. But the dove may not mate with the eagle; the daisy cannot bloom in the exotic parterre. Whatever vices may have sullied the proud annals of Lord Pendarrock's line, the dishonour of a mésalliance has not been among them. The

sport of an idle hour, the prey of Guy Pendarrock's selfish passions—if she is foolish enough to let this warning pass unheeded—these she may be; but his wife, never! If she doubts the faith of this communication, let Miss L'Estrange ask Lord Pendarrock when he intends to marry her; for her good name is being breathed upon by ill report, and if he truly loves her he will hasten to place her under the shield of his protection. AN UNKNOWN FRIEND."

Margaret L'Estrange's face was white with passion as she placed a letter, the contents of which ran as above, in John Heseltine's hand.

He had obeyed her, half hoping, half fearing, and had come down to the School Cottage that evening, only to be met with chill anger and contempt.

He was alone with Margaret—Humphrey as usual busy in an outbuilding he had rigged up as a laboratory.

"I suppose I may thank you for this," the girl said, in clear, cutting tones, as having read the letter, he threw it down upon the table.

"I? Good heavens, Margaret, what do you take me for?"

The scorn and indignation in John Heseltine's voice was too deep to be feigned, and carried conviction to the girl's heart.

"No, Margaret; I would die sooner than stoop to such meanness as, in my opinion, the author of such a thing is guilty of. Upon my word, you think highly of me; the other day you accused me of spying upon you, and now—"

His tone and manner filled Margaret with remorse, and though his place in her affection had been usurped by another, she could not help feeling how honest and noble a nature she had wounded.

"I do not believe you did it now, John," she cried, spontaneously, holding out both hands to him, her eyes full of tears. "Only I thought from what you said to me in the wood—"

"What I had to say, Gretchen, I said openly, and to yourself." His face was averted, and he seemed not to notice her outstretched hands.

"Put the question of love between us aside." His voice faltered, but he continued, courageously: "Had I a dear sister—and, child, will you not be this to me, if you can be nothing more?—I should have spoken to her in just the same way. Margaret, be patient, and listen to me once more. I did not write that letter, and I cannot guess who did. Cowardly and mean as it is, its contents are, I fear, none the less true."

He could not help feeling softened towards her, for all reserve had broken down, and she was weeping bitterly.

"What must I do?" she sobbed. "I have none to advise me. I cannot tell Humphrey, for he would not understand."

"Lean on me, Margaret; let me be your friend and elder brother. I think I may prove a better adviser than Humphrey; for though I am not nearly so good a fellow, perhaps I know more of the world."

What a comfort to rest on the quiet strength of such a friend! It seemed to Margaret that she had never before appreciated all the goodness which lay beneath John Heseltine's somewhat rugged exterior.

"I—I will do anything that you wish," she faltered, with downcast eyes.

"Then give up Lord Pendarrock!" rose to his lips. But he had too much tact to risk the advantage he had gained by such a request, as yet; and, instead, he asked, calmly:

"When shall you see him next?"

"To-morrow evening. I am to meet him in the wood, between six and seven."

"Go, then. Say nothing of this." He pointed to the anonymous letter. "But tell him that he should now proclaim his engagement to you publicly, in order to silence the idle tongues of gossip, and to protect you from all suspicion of evil. That will be the truest test, Margaret. If it proves that I have misjudged Guy Pendarrock, the knowledge will make me very happy, for your sake, child."

"What am I to do about this?" she asked, taking up the letter.

"Nothing. Treat it with the condign contempt it deserves, and throw it behind the fire."

She obeyed; but its contents were branded in letters of fire upon her heart; and with misgivings she could not repress she awaited her meeting with Guy on the morrow.

## CHAPTER VI.

### "ONLY TO END IN PAIN."

FLORENCE AYLMER stood before the cheval glass in her luxurious apartment at the Grange, her French maid, Sophie, engaged in fixing some long trails of frosted ivy upon the creamy white satin dinner dress she wore.

A superb set of sapphires twinkled with blue, frosty fire round her white neck and in her ears, and a Grecian bandeau of gold, set with the same gems, confined the burnished masses of her auburn hair.

Never had the tall mirror reflected a more queenly figure, though many generations of beautiful and stately ladies had gazed into its cool, sombre depths, with what dreams of their own loveliness and power of empire, who shall say?

The heiress's eyes burned with unnatural lustre, and the rose tint of her cheeks had deepened into rich crimson.

It was her last evening at the Grange, though by Lady Cynthia's invitation she had lingered on far beyond the term of her anticipated visit.

"I must go home to-morrow," she said to herself. "Everyone will guess why I am staying, else, and my pride will not brook that. But I am determined that to-night shall decide everything."

The haughty beauty kept her own secrets well. She never unbent to her inferiors or spoke to them of her own affairs. But in spite of her proud reserve she was a woman, and Sophie's native quickness had taught her that sometimes she might venture to repeat small pieces of scandal for her mistress's edification without giving offence—nay, more, any information respecting Lord Pendarrock's habits or tastes was tolerably sure to be rewarded by a reprimand at the time, but a handsome present afterwards. Through Sophie's means Florence had learned that rumours were current in Plas Dynwdd of the peer's admiration for Margaret L'Estrange, and that the two had been seen more than once walking in the Grange Woods together.

Also, that Margaret's engagement to John Heseltine was broken off—a nine day's wonder. Florence Aylmer had affected a languid lack of interest in the subject, and had dismissed it with a—

"Really! you might find something better to do than to repeat such idle tales, Sophie. Go on brushing my hair, and hold your tongue."

But her amour propre was deeply wounded.

"He has tricked, deceived me!" she thought, angrily, "and has been lulling our suspicions to sleep all this while. Ah! I will be even with them both yet."

One afternoon she pleaded bad headache, and remained alone in her room for an hour, the door locked.

Afterwards she came down and declared that she fancied a solitary walk in the open air would do her good.

"Pray allow me to accompany you," Lord Pendarrock had said, politely. But Miss Aylmer declined the offer with an amiable smile.

"Oh! no, indeed, thanks!" she had answered, sweetly. "It will be better for me to be alone; besides, I am only going as far as the post office."

The next day Margaret received the cruel letter, which, however, perhaps proved the means of her deliverance from a fate worse than death.

But of all this Florence Aylmer recked nothing, as she stood before her mirror, in a state of eager suspense, her brilliant beauty heightened by excitement.

"To-night I shall know if my plan has succeeded," she thought. "The girl would get my letter this morning, and I must watch his manner closely. Hearts are often caught at the rebound."

Smiling proudly at the fair reflection in the mirror, she descended the stairs.

Meanwhile, for the last time, Margaret L'Estrange waited at the trysting-place in the Grange Woods.

At last Guy came, full, as usual, of tender excuses for keeping her waiting.

But a dark shade was on his face, and his manner was somewhat perturbed and irritable. Captain Loftus, who had a certain unreasoning regard for his future brother-in-law, had thought it expedient to warn him that gossip was coupling his name with Margaret's. Pierre, the captain's French valet, had struck up a violent flirtation with Florence's maid, Sophie, and in this way acquired the information which the girl had already communicated to her mistress.

Now, Pierre was an astute fellow; and, with a view to possible half-crowns, thought it better to tell his master what he had heard.

He was not disappointed.

"Keep your own counsel, man; but contradict what you have heard whenever you have the chance," said Captain Loftus, slipping a sovereign into his hand.

Then he immediately sought Lord Pendarrock. After warning him, he concluded:

"A stop must be put to this at once, Pen. Whether there is any truth in it or not—and I'm sure I'd rather not know—an innocent girl is being injured, and your own reputation ruined, by such reports. The only thing you can do is to propose to Florence Aylmer at once, and thus effectually silence any such rumours."

Lord Pendarrock swore, raged, and was even angry with the man who had thus stood his friend. But he soon calmed before the imperious coolness of the captain, whose words struck deeper to his heart than he cared to own.

"I'm in the devil of a mess, that's plain!" he thought. "What a fool I have been—just when I wanted to settle down, and to let Society forget the crop of wild oats I have sown, to be tempted afresh by the first pretty face! And all for nothing, too. Margaret is not like the—others. I believe she really cares for me; and so do I for her, after a fashion. But as to marrying her—why she must know that it is quite out of the question."

It may be imagined that he was in no humour to receive patiently Margaret's sorrowful pleading that he would declare her before the world his future wife; though he drew her into his arms, and tried to kiss away her tears. He would no longer shirk coming to a definite understanding with her.

In low, concentrated tones—his face turned away from the gaze of those pure grey eyes, which he dared not meet—he spoke, each word falling like a death stab upon her tender heart:

"Will it not content you to be the one love of my existence, the true queen of my soul alone—though another may bear my name? Child, my life shall be devoted to making your existence a dream of bliss; your splendid musical talent shall be developed, and the adulation of thousands will be poured out like incense at your shrine. Margaret, let me take you away from this wretched village to some place where I will prepare a home fitting for my cherished darling, and where we can live for each other only. Another woman may bear the empty title of my wife, for I cannot run counter to the traditions of our line, or offend the circle in which I move by—by marrying anyone who is not in the same rank of life as myself. But what do such hollow forms signify to us, dearest, when my true wife in all but in name will be my beautiful Margaret?"

To his dying day, Lord Pendarrock was haunted by the look she turned upon him.

With all the colour faded from her face, and in her eyes the expression of a dumb animal which has been mortally wounded, she tried to speak:

but her white lips refused their office. Then with a bitter cry, she sank senseless at his feet.

Frightened, Guy tried to arouse consciousness by rubbing her icy cold hands, and fanning her with a large dock leaf, but his efforts availed nothing.

Suddenly, approaching footsteps were heard, and he hastily sprang up and disappeared into the wood, selfishly leaving the unconscious girl to her fate.

He knew now that "the game was up," as he coarsely phrased it, and that Margaret L'Estrange was lost to him for ever.

Therefore, with the hardened philosophy of a thorough egotist, he determined to try and forget her, and to stifle the occasional pangs of remorse which assailed him.

That night, Florence Aylmer marked with secret satisfaction Lord Pendarrock's gloomy, distracted manner—the charm had worked well.

After dinner the two were together in the conservatory, whither she had skilfully managed to lead him, asking the name of a new fern. Flushed with the deep draughts of champagne he had taken, to drown his disappointment, Guy was recklessly excited. The glamour of the soft, subdued light, and the intoxicating odour of tropical flowers stole over him, in a measure communicating themselves to the beautiful girl at his side. The veiled glances of her hazel eyes seemed full of suppressed tenderness, and Guy Pendarrock's pulses stirred strangely.

"After all, why should I waste more thought upon the past? What woman is worth more than a passing sigh? If she be not fair for me, what care I how fair she be?" he said to himself.

Florence Aylmer had triumphed. A few minutes later, she re-entered the drawing-room, leaning on Guy's arm, a proud smile on her lips—which Lady Cynthia and the faithful captain noted with satisfaction.

She was the affianced bride of Lord Pendarrock.

Guessing what the result of Margaret's interview with Guy would be, John Heseltine had followed her to the wood.

He was shocked to find her lying apparently lifeless on the ground, and did all he could to restore her, with better success than Lord Pendarrock. After a while she opened her eyes, and, with John's help, rose to her feet.

"Take me home," was all she said; and with true delicacy he forebore to question her, supporting her trembling steps to the School Cottage gate.

There, with a warm pressure of the hand, and "God comfort you, my poor Gretchen!" he left her, knowing it was kindest to do so.

All the manhood within him rose up in fiercest indignation against Lord Pendarrock. The veins swelled on his temples, and his muscles knotted themselves like cords, as he involuntarily clenched his fists in wild desire for vengeance.

It would have gone hardly with Lord Pendarrock, had not John Heseltine's better judgment told him that any overt act of violence would make matters even worse for poor Margaret by causing an open escaandre into which her name must be dragged. So for her sake he stifled his feelings, and Heaven alone knew what such a sacrifice cost him!

But one thing he could not do—remain at Ivy Farm. As soon as Margaret recovered—for since that fatal day she had lain ill of brain fever, and was only now slowly gaining strength—he intended to ask her again to be his wife, and to propose that they should leave Plas Dynwdd for a neighbouring county.

As true as steel, John Heseltine's love had undergone no change; the girlish error, which had brought with it so bitter a punishment, was pardoned, fully and freely.

All his anger was swept away by the tide of compassion which rose in his generous heart at the sight of her misery.

Thus it was, that sitting by the sofa on which Margaret lay (a shadow of her former self), one



evening, he asked her gently if their former relations to each other might not be renewed.

With a thrill of fear he awaited the answer.

Might she not love Guy even yet?

It came at last, and filled his soul with exquisite happiness.

"John—dearest, best friend—I am not worthy—"

Her voice failed; but she had said enough. In the shadow of the protecting love which she had now learned to appreciate she had at last found rest.

A last peep into the future.

Upon a satin-draped bed in a luxurious room, surrounded by every comfort wealth can buy, a woman lies, dying. It is Florence, Lady Pendarrock. To the casual observer her face is almost unchanged; but to those who know her well the hectic flush and sharpened outline of her lovely face tell a mournful tale.

After a few years of married life the fell scourge consumption has attacked her, brought on by feverish gaiety and imprudent exposure to cold after nights spent in heated theatres and ball-rooms.

Lord Pendarrock, coolly indifferent, is away shooting on the moors; but kind Lady Cynthia, now married to Captain Loftus, is with her sister-in-law.

There is a slight sound at the door, and the nurse comes in, whispering:

"She is here."

"Flo! Mrs. Heseltine has come," says Lady Cynthia, wondering at the sick woman's strange desire to see Margaret.

In a few moments the two were alone, at Lady Pendarrock's request, and with painful eagerness Florence confessed to the authorship of the anonymous letter.

"Before I die I would have your forgiveness," she concluded, her feeble breath almost exhausted.

Margaret stooped and kissed her brow.

"Forgive you, Lady Pendarrock? That letter was the greatest blessing of my life, for it taught me to value the noble heart which, in spite of my unworthiness, has ever been 'Changeless in Love.'"

And gladdened by the expression of relief on the dying woman's face, she left the room and went out into the star-lit night, where her husband awaited her.

[THE END.]

A TARTAR'S COURTSHIP.—"What do you pay in your country for a wife?" asked a Tartar of an Englishman. "We pay nothing. We ask the girl, and if she says yes, and her parents do not refuse, we marry her." "But if the girl does not like you? If she hits you on the head with her whip, or gallops away when you ride up to her side," replied the Tartar, referring to his nation's method of courtship by running after a girl on horseback; "what do you do in that case?" "Why, we do not marry her." "But if you want to marry her very much; if you love her more than your best horse and all your sheep and camels put together?" the Tartar persisted, putting an extreme case for the sake of argument. "We cannot marry her without her consent." "And are the girls moon-faced?" he continued, setting forth a Tartar's perfection of female beauty. "Some are," said the Englishman. For a few moments the Tartar seemed lost in meditation. Presently, removing his sheepskin hat and rubbing his shaven head, he asked: "Will you take me with you to your country? It would be so nice. I should get a moon-faced wife, and all for nothing. Why, she would not cost so much as a sheep?" "But suppose she would not have you?" "Not have me!" and the Tartar looked astonished. "Not have me! Well, I should give her a white wrapper or a ring for her ears or her nose." "And if she still refused you?" "Why, I should give her a gold ornament for her head, and what girl could resist such a present?"

## FACETIÆ.

"Do you enjoy good health, Zachary?" "Why, yes, to be sure; who doesn't?"

IMPERTINENT young men should be careful about dropping remarks. They may be picked up by bigger men.

"THERE'S another lode off my mind," as the seller of a worthless mine said, after the speculative purchaser had gone his way.

A DISAPPOINTED young man says he wishes he was a rumour, because a rumour soon gains currency, which he has never been able to do.

THE TRADE HE PREFERRED.—A convict, sent to prison, was asked what trade he preferred. He said that if it was all the same to them, he preferred to be a sailor.

OLD Judge Stavles was fond of saying, and he always thought it was a witty thing to say, "I've preferred the lighter sort of literature ever since my unabridged dictionary fell upon my gouty toes."

"Do you think," asked Mrs. Pepper, "that a little temper is a bad thing in a woman?" "Certainly not, ma'am," replied a gallant philosopher; "it is a good thing, and she ought never to lose it."

SOLD.—A young gentleman in the country recently sent twenty-five stamps to Boston for a method of writing without pen or ink. He received the following instructions, in large type on a card: "Write with a pencil."

At a recent school examination the son of a coal dealer was asked how many pounds there were in a ton. He was sharp enough to reply: "Maybe you think I'm going to give it away and get licked when I go home."

AN exchange says: "'A Sad Tragedy' is a favourite expression with an esteemed contemporary. The adjective serves to distinguish such catastrophes from the joyous tragedies which make a picnic of this mortal life."

A VERY old lady on her death-bed, in a penitential mood, said: "I have been a great sinner more than eighty years, and didn't know it." An old darkey woman, who had lived with her a long time, exclaimed: "Lors! I knowed it all de time."

A MAN who had been arrested as a vagrant protested he had a regular trade and calling—to wit, smoking glass for total eclipses of the sun; and as these occur only a few times in a century, he was not to blame for being out of employment a good deal.

"WHAT do you think of my new shoes, dear?" said she the other evening after tea. "Oh! immense, my dear, perfectly immense!" said he, without looking up from his paper. Then she began to cry, and said she thought if he thought her feet were so dreadfully large, he needn't tell her of it.

HE WANTED A COMPANION.—Young George D. having importuned his father for a horse, the indulgent parent presented him with the ancient steed which for years had carried him about the city streets. A few days afterward, the affectionate son interviewed his father and renewed his request, saying, "Father, can't you give me a horse a little nearer my own age, that would be more of a companion for me?"

NOT TO BE CAUGHT.—There was, many years ago, a Lazy Man's Society organized in Philadelphia. One of the articles required that no man belonging to the society should ever be in a hurry. Should he violate this article, he must stand treat to the other members. Now it happened on a time that the doctor was driving post-haste through the streets to visit a patient. The members of the society saw him, and chuckled over the idea of a treat; and on his return reminded him of his fast driving and violation of the rules. "Not at all," said the doctor. "The truth is, my horse was determined to go, and I felt too lazy to stop him." They did not catch him that time.

SENATOR PENDLETON, of Ohio, is said to be an aristocrat, and "as hard to reach as an oyster in the soup-bowl of a charity entertainment."

A TENNESSEE man can so perfectly imitate the sounds made by two dogs engaged in fighting, that he can call a Memphis congregation out of church in three minutes.

THEY call it a romantic marriage in Michigan when a couple of the neighbours get the bride's father in a back room and sit on him to prevent his interrupting and breaking up the wedding.

A LITTLE girl read a composition before the minister. The subject was, "A cow." She weaved in this complimentary sentence: "The cow is the most useful animal in the world except religion."

A ST. LOUIS paper mildly apologized for Congressman De La Matyr by saying: "It is worthy of remark that Mr. De La Matyr does not appear to be much more of a fool than he was this time a year ago."

THERE came very near being a panic in a Chicago theatre a few nights ago. A man arose between the acts and said: "Come, Colonel, let's go out and take something," and half the male audience in the parquet got up and said they would.

RELIGIOUS TRACTS sent to a man with a penny postage due on them are not conducive either to religious thought, word, or action. We have in our mind a young man who was just wavering in the balance; the penny decided him, and he became a howling heathen.

A WICKED boy got into a fight with his uncle, and biting off his nose, swallowed it. He was brought before the police-court, his uncle appearing against him. "That's your nephew, is he?" asked the magistrate. "I am sorry to say he is." "I think I detect some resemblance," said the judge. "Yes," replied the uncle, mournfully, "he has my nose."

TOMMY was a little rogue, whom his mother had hard work to manage. Their house in the country was raised a few feet from the ground, and Tommy, to escape a well-deserved whipping, ran from his mother and crept under the house. Presently the father came home, and hearing where the boy had taken refuge, crept under to bring him out. As he approached on his hands and knees, Tommy said: "Sh! Is she after you, too?"

MR. RAMSCHNEIDER and his friend August Fifemacher were out walking, and Mr. Ramschneider was boasting of his dog's intelligence. "See here," he said, "I place my hat here, in this fence corner; I conceal it under the brush and dried leaves. We will now go walk on. We pass down the lane, we geturnen this corner, we stroll by the woods. I send Bismarck back for my hat. See, my friend, he comprehends me; he flies through the woods, he speeds down the lane, he disappears around the corner, presently he will back gekommen before I have time to catch cold in my head." But he did not get it all the same. For just as he flew around the corner a way though not an affluent tramp, who had watched the circus from afar, was in the act of appropriating Mr. Ramschneider's new hat unto himself, and when the dog got up in short range he fired a clay-cold clod, as hard as a door knob, at that faithful animal, with a force that knocked a howl out of him as long as a clothes line, and sent him wailing and weeping back to his astonished master. And when Mr. Ramschneider and his friend hastened to investigate, they found under the brush an old hat that had lived in more ash heaps than you could count in a week, and so greasy and forbidding in its general appearance that Mr. Ramschneider wouldn't touch it with his cane. Far away, beyond the distant fields, they saw the sunlight shining on Mr. Ramschneider's 10s. hat, and the tramp at the dusty highway was joggling along under it. But Mr. Ramschneider walked home bare as to his head, which is of the bald, baldy, and he hasn't got out of bed yet with the cold he caught.

IN PREPARATION.

## A NEW NOVEL

By RICHARD DOWLING,

AUTHOR OF

"The Mystery of Killard," "The Weird Sisters,"  
 "The Sport of Fate," "The Husband's Secret,"  
 "Strawberry Leaves," "A Sapphire Ring," etc.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS ON MR. DOWLING'S  
PREVIOUS NOVELS.

"Holds the reader spell-bound."—"Daily Telegraph."

"A book to read and be thankful for. It will be a day to be marked by a white stone when Mr. Dowling gives us another novel."—"Standard."

"No one who remembers Mr. Richard Dowling's remarkable story, 'The Mystery of Killard,' and no one who read it can have forgotten it, will be surprised to find in his new novel, 'The Weird Sisters' (3 vols., Tinsley Brothers), an extraordinary amount of peculiar and original power. . . . Even the most case-hardened novel-reader, should he find himself engaged with the second volume in the dim and solitary reaches of the night, will wish he could lay the book by till the morning. Mr. Dowling will not allow him to do it. His hold is like the Ancient Mariner's, and the tale must be told and heard to the end. The striking peculiarity which, it will be remembered, the author of 'Uncle Silas' displayed in a marked degree, of writing out wordless soliloquy, is Mr. Dowling's gift as well. He can make his people think aloud. This is infinitely more effective in revealing the processes and changes of character than description. . . . Mr. Dowling's power is essentially dramatic; he excels in dialogue and situation. There is a half-page in the third volume (p. 48) which, to those who have read up to it, has a breathless concentration of intensity. Again, in the same volume, occurs a short scene between Grey and Sir William Midhurst, as quick in interchange of dramatic suggestion as anything we remember in fiction."—"Daily News."

"He has chosen to write what is wittily termed a sensation story, and he has managed at his first attempt to beat Miss Braddon in her own line. This is strong speaking, but those who take our advice and read 'The Weird Sisters' will find that we have expressed with strict accuracy a fact which will become patent to them before the end of the first volume. The whole merit of the book lies in the fashion whereby a difficult intrigue is wrought out to its finish, so we will not spoil sport by giving even a hint at the plot. Suffice it to say that Mr. Dowling has the story-telling faculty developed in high degree. He catches your interest at the first page, and even if you are inclined to be indifferent or rebellious, you find it well-nigh impossible to forbear surrendering your keenest attention. 'The book has not a dull passage.'—"Vanity Fair."

"Mr. Dowling writes powerfully and well, aiming at producing sensationalism of the highest type, yet steering clear of the unhealthy sensualism which mars the success of so many modern novels. 'The Weird Sisters' is an intensely interesting work."—"Graphic."

"A strange, powerful romance."—"Globe."

"Novels are so apt to belie their name by running in the most well-worn of ruts, and by exhibiting a striking deficiency of novelty, that we welcome with special eagerness any outcome of real imaginative invention; and the conception of the original situation, the nature of which is sufficiently indicated here, amply proves that Mr. Dowling possesses a large measure of genuine creative power."—"Spectator."

"This work alone would have been enough to have established the author's claim to a place amongst the first of living writers of exciting action of the more intense kind."—"Morning Post."

"Full of dramatic action. Clever delineations of strongly contrasted human eccentricities, interwoven with which is a love story of singular freshness."—"Illustrated London News."

"The nature of the novel is indeed uncommonly fine."—"World."

"The story is kept mysterious with success."—"Athenaeum."

"The novel is unquestionably powerful, well written, true to the life which it describes, and eminently pure and healthy in tone."—"Globe."

"Although not a little blasé of novel reading, we have been able to read 'The Mystery of Killard' from cover to cover, with unflagging interest."—"Irish Times."

"The characters are well drawn, the descriptions are almost photographic, and the story is vigorously written."—"Whitehall Review."

"He has given us a book to 'read,' and one we can commend to all who care for a realistic picture without the too common trash associated with the ordinary novels."—"Examiner."

"We have not read a novel with so much pleasure for a long time."—"John Bull."

"Full of interest, which increases with every chapter."—"Pictorial World."

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AN OLD WOMAN.—Put the wine aside, and in time it will lose its sweetness—probably in a year or two.

BILLY.—Silkworms' eggs may be purchased in Covent Garden. We cannot tell you the price.

ON THE BRINK.—You must be a little more watchful of his actions, and a little less so of his words, if you wish to fairly understand such a man. Despite all he says so rudely and offensively, you may yet find him a lover thoroughly worthy of your girlish heart, and one likely to make you an excellent husband. The gift of expressing actual feelings and sentiments in words is not given to everybody, and some attempts that are ludicrously awkward and misleading, are, nevertheless, honest attempts, indicative of true affection.

A NEW SUBSCRIBER.—The Spencos were a religious-political sect of the present century, founded by an itinerant bookseller named Spence. The great principle of their creed was that "all human beings are equal by nature, and before the law, and have a continual and inalienable property in the earth and its natural productions." They also held that "every man, woman, and child, whether born in wedlock or not (for nature and justice know nothing of illegitimacy), is entitled, quarterly, to an equal share of the rents of a parish where they have settlement." The founder called his creed, "A Receipt to Make a Millennium, or Happy World." Their Sabbath was on the fifth day, which was devoted to rest and recreation; they ignored the Bible as an inspired volume, and recognized no moral laws as binding. These are all the particulars we have been able to obtain for you.

UNFANSY.—The ointment is rubbed into the skin to promote the absorption of the medicinal substance contained in it.

A.—Anciently Germany was split up into separate States, each independent of the others.

H. M.—The first man burnt alive in this country for his religious opinions was Sir William Sawtre, on February 19th, 1401.

CAROLINE SMOLLETT.—Certainly not.

C. SPENCER.—The voyage across the Channel in a balloon, successfully made by Blanchard and Dr. Jeffries, took place in 1785. Madame Blanchard was killed by setting her balloon on fire while exhibiting fireworks in the air, during an ascent from the Tuileries Gardens, Paris, in June, 1819. A full account of Blanchard's voyage, written by Mr. A. H. Hall, appeared in a recent issue of "Time."

J. B.—The Act of Parliament for improving Temple Bar was passed in June, 1795.

HENRY BROADHEAD.—It was Lady Maxwell who enabled Wesley to found the Kingswood School.

M. C.—It is a mistake due to your ignorance of the fact that Defoe, to avoid the attacks of his enemies, published some of his later works under the assumed name of "Andrew Morton, Esq."

G. C. E.—Ivy is one of the few shrubs which the smoke of London does not injure.

PHILAN.—Yes. In 1839 there was not a single criminal hanged in London.

E. S.—The word "deodant" signifies a gift to God.

W. RICHARDS.—Wire can be purchased at a wire-drawer's, of whom there are several in London; one in Drury Lane and one in Tottenham Court Road occur to us.

J. C. A.—A marriage in England can only be annulled by divorce in England; a decree of divorce obtained in any other country is of no avail.

S. G. W.—Certainly; but there should be no doubt as to the evidence of guilt.

W. L. K.—Distances west of London are usually reckoned from Hyde Park Corner. As to the other query, consult Dickens's "Dictionary of London."

W. H. RICHARDSON.—The Oriel Gymnastic Society holds its meetings at the Railway Station, Blackfriars.

NOVICE.—The duties of stewards at a ball are generally to look after the comfort and enjoyment of the guests, and particularly at the supper. Sometimes it is the privilege of stewards to make up any deficiency in finances.

M. C. H.—The title is probably extinct, and is not to be found in "County Families." First ascertain the county in which "Sir Erasmus" flourished, and then search among the records of that county.

W. L. CLAPHAM.—The daily papers are the most suitable for your purpose; and of these select those with the largest circulation.

N. H.—According to an old report of the Small Pox Hospital, in the twenty years previous to the introduction of vaccination there died in that hospital alone 1867 patients; but in the subsequent twenty years, ending with 1819, only 814 patients died. From the same report we glean that during the former period the number of deaths were 36,189; and during the latter, 22,480. Such facts require no comment.

J. WILLIAMSON.—Thistlewood and the Cato Street Conspirators were arrested on February 23rd, 1820; they were sent to Newgate, tried, condemned, and executed on the first of the following May.

W. FARRIS.—The Parliamentary census was first taken in 1861.

D. W.—The proprietor of Cremorne Gardens, Mr. Simpson, was brought before the magistrate for cruelty to animals by sending them up into the air suspended from balloons. A female was also sent up, riding on a bull, and costumed as Europa. From the same Gardens also acrobats went up suspending themselves head downward. There is no end to the wild freaks of sensational balloonists.

F. E.—Porto Rico was discovered in 1497.

A. J. M.—You need not destroy your birdage. Apply rectified vegetable naphth with a camel-hair brush, and the vermin will be destroyed.

TYRO.—The bird has probably been kept in a draught.

LOUISA.—You may be as troublesome as you will while you write such charming letters. Thanks for the suggestions.

X. Y. Z.—Mr. Landseer is an architect; but he has neither true feeling for art nor sympathy for artists. We do not know how he obtained the position as secretary. We think, however, you must be mistaken in saying he has obtained permission to exclude art-students from the National Galleries.

JAMES SAURIN.—The famous traveller Belzoni died at Gao, in Africa, December 3rd, 1823.

A LADY READER.—Personal cleanliness, fresh pure air, regular exercise, and a proper supply of wholesome food, will do more for the production of a fine complexion, bright eyes, and a good figure than any more artificial processes.

MATE.—The child is over-fed.

G. H. L.—Horne Bay was no ancient history; it is of very modern creation. It was quite a new town in 1836.

O. U.—Your information is to us what Westminster Abbey was to Artemus Ward—"a sweet boom." But what can we do with it? It is of no use to us, and the flights of our imagination are not wild enough to find out any living person who wants it. Why give it away gratis?

C. AND S.—Mildew may be removed with a very weak solution of chloride of lime, which will neither rot the cloth nor remove the dye.

S. SMITH.—The word "gin" is the technical abbreviation for engine. Thus cotton gin is merely the abbreviation of cotton engine.

A. SEATTLEWORTH.—The Peep o' Day Boys were doing the work of the Land Leaguers in 1789.

JOSEPH SCOTT.—White partridges are not altogether unknown; records of their having been shot by sportsmen are in existence.

CONVOLVULUS.—The photograph is that of a young lady of about nineteen, plain, but pleasing, with a kindly, sympathising expression.

S. B.—Three of the stones of Stonehenge fell in 1797.

VOLCANO.—Pray don't. Your letter is quite enough.

OXFORD.—Linen and thread were manufactured from the fibres of nettles in Ireland in 1819.

G. S.—The story, we suppose, will always be repeated as a true one; but it is false. The late Mr. Harrison Answorth wrote afterwards to the "Times," stating that there was no foundation for the story published to the effect that Convoisier acknowledged his having been incited to commit murder by reading that novelist's "Jack Sheppard." The condemned man declared he had never read it in his life.

Y. Z.—The Scilly Islands are about thirty miles west of the Land's End, in Cornwall.

A VOLUNTEER.—The London Artillery Company was revived in 1610.

WILLIAM ASHFIELD.—Marivaux, the novelist and dramatist, was born in 1688, and died in 1763.

SUBSCRIBER.—The Saxon names of places often end in "den" (an outlying tract), "holt" or "hurst" (a wood), "stead" (a station), "chorp" (a village), and "worth" (a manor). Instances will be found in Walworth, Hampstead, Marsden, Chislehurst, Knockholt, Alverthorp, etc.

THESEIAN.—The original performer of Falstaff was Lowin.

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‡‡ When no answer is given in the columns of the LONDON READER it must be understood the Editor is unable to comply with the request made.

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